

RENT

based on the stage musical by Jonathan Larson

screenplay adaptation by Stephen Chbosky

1st Draft, April 14, 2000

In New York, you see it all the time. Street performers. Homeless performers. Rock clubs. Protests. Young artists jamming. Any season, any year. This city sings. So, when reading the following pages and trying to see the wet streets and alleys, young faces, and Christmas lights, I encourage you to try and HEAR the movie as well. The soundtrack mixed like a rock concert, not a film. The performances not lip-synched. But vibrant. The emotional and visceral sensation we all had going to our first concert. Our ears ringing. Our cheeks red. So God Damn happy. Imagine that sensation as you get to know Mark, Roger, Mimi, Angel, Collins, Benny, Maureen, and Joanne. The sound in the red. Blasting over the cold wet streets. Alive. This movie, like the show it was based on, and opera, and short story, is a celebration. A celebration of young people struggling to make art and live life in the face of heavy obstacles, both inside and out. A document to the idea that youth is fleeting, we only live once, and there is no day but today.

RENT SONG LIST:

The following is a list of songs as they appear in the screenplay with references to where they are on the 2 CD RENT Broadway Soundtrack. All songs with an asterisk (*) contain lyric edits in the screenplay. All songs that are instrumental versions are noted with a number (#) symbol.

- 1) "Rent" - Disc One - Track 4*
- 2) "Seasons of Love" - Disc Two - Track 1
- 3) "Will I?" - Disc One - Track 16#
- 4) "Do Unto Them" - J. Larson song from Half Empty House
- 5) "I'll Cover You" - Disc One - Track 19#
- 6) "You Okay Honey?" - Disc One - Track 5*
- 7) "One Song Glory" - Disc One - Track 7
- 8) "You'll See Boys" - Disc One - Track 11#
- 9) "Life Support" - Disc One - Track 13*

- 10) "Santa Fe" - Disc One - Track 18*
- 11) "Tango: Maureen" - Disc One - Track 12*
- 12) "Christmas Bells" - Disc One - Track 21*
- 13) "Take Me Out Tonight" - Disc One - Track 14
- 14) "Another Day" - Disc One - Track 15
- 15) "Will I?" - Disc One - Track 16
- 16) "La Vie Boheme" - Disc One - Track 23*
- 17) "La Vie Boheme B" - Disc One - Track 25*
- 18) "Happy New Year" - Disc Two - Track 2#
- 19) "Contact" - Disc Two - Track 9*

- 20) "Without You" - Disc Two - Track 7
- 21) "Take Me or Leave Me" - Disc Two - Track 5
- 22) "I'll Cover You (reprise)" - Disc Two - Track 10
- 23) "Halloween" - Disc Two - Track 11#
- 24) "Goodbye Love" - Disc Two - Track 12#
- 25) "Destination Sky" - J. Larson song from Half Empty House
- 26) "Open Road" - J. Larson song from Half Empty House
- 27) "Your Eyes" - Disc Two - Track 16
- 28) "Finale B" - Disc Two - Track 17

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY-- VARIOUS LOCATIONS-- NIGHT

Quick documentary images and sounds. Heightened. The cinematic equivalent of turning a radio dial through New York City at Christmas time. Ice skating. Trees. Filthy snow. Cold wet feet. Shoppers. Lovers. Assholes.

We're on the street. A drum is beating. And this LATINO KID is banging the hell out of it. A crowd throws him money.

On another street, FIVE BLACK KIDS are break-dancing for a crowd of theatre goers, who are enjoying it more than the show they're about to go back into.

On another street, THREE HOMELESS MEN are humming a melody in a gorgeous three part harmony. A thick bass, a smooth baritone, and a sharp bracing tenor.

On another street, a crowd has gathered to look at something. Police barriers are set up. Is it a murder? NO. Someone is shooting a movie. The trucks and trailers are set up. Parking permits abound. It's a huge, impressive crew.

We follow like guerillas the grips and electrics as they carry lights into...

INT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

The notorious club. A legend. Now, a brand name. And on the stage, camera assistants are measuring light. The extras, AVENUE A KIDS dressed as their punky fuck you selves, mill about waiting for their cue to tear up some shit.

Makeup is applied behind the bar, serving as a holding pen for the actors, while the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR barks commands.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Everyone to positions.

AVENUE A KID
It's about fucking time!

Our Roger gets on the stage to nasty applause. The A kids have been waiting too long. Our Mark takes his position behind a 16mm camera. Our Benny sits down among a group of kids, straightening his nice jacket, getting into character.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OKAY. Now, we want energy people.

AVENUE A KID
Fuck you.

Laughter. Our Roger takes over for the assistant director.

OUR ROGER

Yeah. Yeah. Listen up. We're The Well Hungarians and in this scene, you love us. But if you don't, then don't pretend. The thing about this whole show is that there was some guy in his little shit hole apartment, and he worked on this like it was his last breath. And yeah... it may be just a show and yeah, we're all here pretending, but we don't have to be. This is real. And I'm really singing. And you're really here tearing up seats. So, let's put on that show. The real show. When that red light goes on and that horn sounds, let's tear this fucking thing up because we're here, and we can. When that red light goes on, let's just let the whole thing come alive.

EXT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

A makeshift sound stage light flashes brilliant RED and the horn **BLASTS** for quiet everywhere but...

INT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

On the stage, ROGER, 22, is with his band, THE WELL HUNGARIANS, and they are, to use band speak, gelling. After two years, they know each other's moves and they attack each note from the top. It's a fat angry sound and Roger is singing. He's gorgeous. Charismatic. The song is "Rent."
NOTE: All song lyrics are in italics.

ROGER

*How do you document real life
when real life's getting more like
fiction each day? Headlines,
breadlines, blow my mind, and now this
deadline, eviction or pay. Rent.*

MARK COHEN, 23, funny and loyal and smart, is filming the show with his old 16mm Bolex camera. He tells one of the kids to get out of the way. The kid responds by slapping Mark's camera. It hits the ground with a BANG! Mark freaks, picks up the camera, and starts shooting. Whew. Not broken.

ROGER (cont'd)

*How do you write a song when the chords
sound wrong though they once sounded
right and rare? When the notes are
(MORE)*

ROGER (cont'd)
sour, where is the power you once had to
ignite the air?

Some A kids are starting to get into the band. Tapping
reluctant feet. MIKE, the Well Hungarians androgynous bass
player, steps up to the microphone with Roger.

MIKE
We're hungry and frozen

ROGER
Some life that we've chosen.

The song finds a pocket and Mike and Roger sing a tight two
part harmony. Looking at each other. Sweating. Feeding off
each other's energy. Roger high and bracing. Mike smooth.

ROGER & MIKE
How we gonna pay? How we gonna pay?
How we gonna pay? Last year's rent.

At his own table sits Benjamin Coffin III. BENNY (23) looks
out of place in the club. Better dressed and composed. A
black guy where most of the CB crowd is white. He's watching
the show, intently. A drunk rowdy kid spills beer on his
jacket. Benny pushes the kid back. It starts a mosh pit.

ROGER
How do you start a fire when there's
nothing to burn and it feels like
something's stuck in your flue? How can
you generate heat when you can't feel
your feet, and they're turning blue!

MIKE
You light up a mean blaze

ROGER
With posters

MIKE
And screenplays.

ROGER & MIKE
How we gonna pay? How we gonna pay?
How we gonna pay? Last year's rent.

In front of the stage, a circle forms around a little show
happening on it's own. She's not pretty. But she's dripping
hot. The kind of girl you just want to fuck (no offense).

The circle chants as the girl slowly peels off items of
clothing. This is MAUREEN, 22. Sexy, diva, workin' it,
exhibitionist, tits, ass, and money Maureen.

Mark Cohen, in a comic double take, stops filming the band and turns his camera on Maureen as she jumps on the stage with Roger and Mike, pretending to give them both head. Mike and Roger look at each. "Who's this chick?"

ROGER

*How do you stay on your feet when on
every street it's trick or treat and
tonight is...*

Roger indicates Maureen.

ROGER (cont'd)

*Trick. Welcome back to town you should
lie down everything's brown and uh oh...*

Maureen bends over the stage and throws up. It seems like part of the show. Mark can't get enough of this insane girl.

ROGER (cont'd)

She feels sick.

MIKE

Who is she?

ROGER

Getting dizzy.

ROGER & MIKE

*How we gonna pay? How we gonna pay?
How we gonna pay? Last year's rent.*

The song continues instrumentally while Roger addresses the crowd. Completely at ease.

ROGER

*I just have to stop singing and just say
I fucking love this girl puking on my
feet. I want to marry her. Are you
alright?*

MAUREEN

Fucking great. Don't stop. Don't stop!

ROGER

*Are you guys going to help us end this
song or what?*

The Avenue A kids all applaud.

ROGER (cont'd)

*Alright. If you know the words, sing
with us. And when we get to the chorus,
(MORE)*

ROGER (cont'd)
I want to hear everybody. Mark. Mark
Cohen! Pussy!

Mark snaps out of his Maureen trance and turns the camera back on Roger, who beckons him on stage.

ROGER (cont'd)
Not the camera. Get up here.

Mark shakes his head. NO. Roger gives him the stare. Mark comes up, daintily stepping over Maureen's body. Let's just say Mark is a lot more comfortable looking at people than getting looked at.

ROGER (cont'd)
My roommate Mark Cohen everybody. He's making a video for the band and this Spring, he's making an independent movie starring...

MARK
Oh... uh... Bob Denver.

ROGER
Who?

MARK
Gilligan of Gilligan's Island.

The A kids go wild! Mark is caught off guard and suddenly loves the attention. He stands between Roger and Mike's sweaty faces. Mark's singing is reluctant at first, but after a beat, he starts to really love it. Just joyous.

ROGER
Ready. Go.

The fans join in. It's a big wall of sound.

ROGER & MARK & FANS
How do you leave the past behind when it
keeps finding ways to get to your heart.
It reaches way down deep and tears you
inside out 'til you're torn apart. Rent.

Mike steps in for Mark. The crowd applauds Mark as Mark calls up Benny. Benny smiles and climbs up onto the stage. The once reluctant crowd is starting to get rowdy.

ROGER & MIKE & FANS
How can you connect in an age where
strangers, landlords, lovers, your own
blood cells betray.

Mark and Benny join Roger and Mike and the whole crowd is on its feet, singing, dancing, tearing up.

ALL

*What binds the fabric together when the
raging, shifting winds of change keep
ripping away.*

Roger nudges Benny forward.

BENNY

*Draw a line in the sand and then make a
stand!*

ROGER

Use your camera to spar.

MARK

Use your guitar.

ROGER & MIKE & CROWD

*When they act tough - you call their
bluff.*

Roger leans over to Mark.

ROGER & MARK

We're not gonna pay.

Mike joins in. The crowd is rising.

ROGER & MARK & MIKE

We're not gonna pay.

It's infectious, and the whole crowd chimes in.

EVERYBODY

We're not gonna pay. Last year's rent.

Roger continues the chorus and mimes the next lyric for the crowd. Jumping. Up and down.

EVERYBODY (cont'd)

This year's rent.

Roger again. The word "next." Everyone sings.

EVERYBODY (cont'd)

*Next year's rent. Rent. Rent. Rent.
Rent. Rent. We're not gonna pay rent.*

Roger looks at Mark. "Come on. Finish with me."

ROGER & MARK
'Cause everything is rent!

A big flourish. Crunch. Crunch. Gone. The song ends to the kind of applause that says, "Thank you for getting my uptight ass up and dancing."

EXT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

The movie trucks and cameras are gone. The Avenue A kids are no longer extras, but themselves.

AVENUE A KID
That was fucking great.

ANOTHER A KID
Oh, they sucked.

SUBTITLE: New York City, December 21, 1991

INT. CBGB'S BATHROOM-- NIGHT

It looks we're in a lava lamp. Blood dancing in water and heroin. Someone is "booting". When the blood mixes fully, the whole load is shot through the needle into...

ROGER. His eyes go from hungry to fucked up and pleasant. He hands the works to TWO JERSEY GIRLS. They adore him. Want to fuck him. Like the mall.

ROGER
Debbie Harry had sex in this room.

JERSEY GIRLS
(simultaneous - for laughs)
No shit.

One lights a cig. The other fills the syringe with water from the sink tap. Roger smiles. Great smile.

ROGER
Television, the New York Dolls, Patti Smith right here.

JERSEY GIRL #1
You guys were fucking great tonight.

INT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

Mike is banging on the bathroom door. He's gotta piss.

MIKE
Come on, Roger. Jesus!

The door opens, and Mike beelines for the bathroom. Roger and the girls walk out into the club. Hazy. The girls are making their move on Roger. Cooing.

JERSEY GIRL #2
You're boring.

ROGER
No. I'm taken.

JERSEY GIRL #1
Then, your girlfriend's boring.

Roger doesn't like people talking shit about his girlfriend.

ROGER
She puts up with my ass, alright? Thanks for the dope.

Roger leaves the girls.

JERSEY GIRL #2
Way to fuck it up.

JERSEY GIRL #1
Pepper, find another dick to suck. Okay? Jesus.

Roger passes Mark and Maureen, sitting at a table. He pats Mark's shoulder and keeps moving. We stay at the table.

MAUREEN
I want to do performance art pieces that decry the abusive treatment and objectification of women.

MARK
(wants to fuck her)
It's so wrong.

MAUREEN
Exactly! Pieces like Laurie Anderson did in the 80's. You ever see her?

MARK
(never heard of her)
All the time.

Maureen smiles. She knows he's lying. But enjoys the game.

MAUREEN
So, tell me about this Gilligan movie.

MARK
Well, it's very political.

INT. CBGB'S-- LATER

The club is dark except for the bar and one table where Benny sits with Roger, Mark, and the entourage including the band, Maureen, and the Jersey girls (now hanging all over Mike). The table looks warm like a campfire. Roger looks up.

ROGER
Collins!

A man stands at the door. Black. Masculine. A vagabond. A computer genius. A kind face. Gay. And with all that said, we haven't even cracked the surface of TOM COLLINS (27).

COLLINS
So, what'd I miss?

The greetings are warm as Collins finds a place at the table.

MARK
Sit down. Sit down. Benny says he has good news.

Everyone settles in, and attention is turned to Benny.

BENNY
Allison's father bought me the building.

The group ad-libs SHOCK, then excitement. This is good news.

JERSEY GIRL #1
(whispers)
Who's Allison?

MIKE
His wife.

BENNY
A couple of investors and I can finally build the cyber-studio. Publishing, film, music, all under one roof. No outside bullshit. Can you imagine?

MARK
(excited)
And you can rent out the top floors. You . . . won't even need an overhead deal.

ROGER
That's great, Benny. Congratulations.

BENNY

No, man. Congratulations to you. You're going to get signed this year. You know that.

Roger smiles sheepishly.

BENNY (cont'd)

Look at that fucking smile. You're a star waiting to happen, and Mark's making his movie. So, I want you guys to use your money for equipment. Film stock. Whatever. Consider me a patron. You can live rent free in our old loft, work on your stuff, and when the cyber studio takes off... we'll have our first two artists in residence.

MARK

Are you serious?

BENNY

Robin Hood just married the Sheriff of Nottingham's daughter. You're golden.

ROGER

Jesus, Benny. I don't know what to say.

BENNY

Say you'll accept.

MARK

We accept.

The three guys sit in the glow of their friendship. A beat. COLLINS talks to the rest of the group.

COLLINS

Come on, everybody. The boys are going to have a "moment".

MARK

No. Wait. I propose a toast.

BENNY

What?

MARK

One year from tonight. The band is signed. My film is in Sundance. Maureen's performance piece is off Broadway. Laurie and Pepper are in beauty school.

The Jersey girls (Laurie and Pepper) nod.

MARK (cont'd)
Collins is getting his diploma from
M.I.T. And Benny has his cyber studio.

BENNY
That I'll drink to.

The group ad-libs big agreement.

ROGER
Hey, Adam.

The bartender ADAM, 35, smiles. This guy has been at CBGB's for 15 years, and he's heard it all before. But he always hopes for the kids. It's what keeps him around.

ADAM
What are you drinking?

ROGER
Yagermeister.

EVERYBODY
Oh, shit.

COLLINS
Stoli for me.

The Yagermeister and Collins' Stoli is poured and delivered.

MARK
To one year.

ALL
One year.

The Yagermeister is gulped. A beat. Then, groans.

EXT. CBGB'S-- DAWN

The entire entourage laughs into the early morning, making a trail through the fresh snow. Mark squints at the sun.

MARK
God's flashlight.

Maureen sees a three piece SUIT walking downtown, giving the kids a dirty look. Maureen smiles at the man, taunting...

MAUREEN
(sing-song)
You have to go to work now. You have to
go to work now.

Mike and the band leave with Laurie and Pepper. Warm "see ya's" all around. Benny turns to Roger.

BENNY
April's going to kick your ass.

ROGER
What about Allison?

BENNY
Good point.

ROGER
Where'd Mark go?

Benny points and Roger looks over to see Maureen and Mark, laughing together.

ROGER (cont'd)
That romance just screams future.

BENNY
No shit.

The friends look at each other. All love need not be spoken.

ROGER
I miss you being around, Benny. April
misses you, too.

Benny smiles. Then, points to Roger's arm.

BENNY
You gotta stop doing that shit before she
leaves you, you know?

Roger nods. Benny smiles and moves to a huge white limo.

BENNY
Can I give you a lift Collins?

Collins nods and gets in.

MARK & MAUREEN
See ya Benny! Collins!

Benny waves and climbs in. Roger calls out to Mark.

ROGER
You guys coming to the loft?

MARK
No. Maureen wants me to show me her latest performance piece.

ROGER
I'll bet.

Our view goes above. Mark & Maureen walk downtown. Benny's limo drives uptown. Roger walks East toward Avenue B. The image is of the friends going in three different directions.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- DAWN

Roger walks through the park. We see him in the distance, passing homeless people and A kids.

ROGER
(to himself)
April, I know. Okay? It was just a little bit to celebrate.

INT. LOFT BUILDING

We see Roger from below, climbing endless stairs. Two at a time. Quickly.

ROGER
I promise. No more. Alright?

INT. HALLWAY RIGHT OUTSIDE THE LOFT

Roger puts his key in the lock.

ROGER
Just do me one favor... don't be awake.

Deep breath. He opens the door.

INT. THE LOFT

It's quiet. The sofa empty. Roger whispers.

ROGER
April? April?

Roger exhales. Whew. She's not awake. He puts his stuff at the base of an old coat tree and moves into the loft. It's spacious and run down. Rock 'n roll posters hang on the walls along with classic cult movie posters. Faster Pussycat Kill Kill. Harold & Maude. The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

INT. LOFT KITCHENETTE

Roger walks into the little room and grabs a box of Cap'n Crunch. He turns around and freezes.

ROGER
God dammit.

There's a note on the counter. All the outside says is "Roger." He walks over to pick it up, frustrated, thinking April finally left him. He opens the note, already guessing what it says, until he sees what it really says. His face goes pale. Three words... "WE HAVE AIDS."

His jaw opens. His eyes widen. "Is this a joke?" He rushes out of the kitchen. Pissed. Scared shitless. Everything.

INT. ROGER AND APRIL'S BEDROOM

Roger looks in the room. The bed is made and not slept in.

ROGER
April!

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM

Roger rushes in. Tons of movie equipment. No April. He looks panicked. Leaves.

ROGER
April! God dammit!

INT. HALLWAY

Roger rushes down the hall. The image bouncing and rough.

ROGER
Where the fuck are you?!

INT. THE BATHROOM

Roger rushes into the bathroom. April is in the bathtub. Her eyes are opened right toward him. Not looking. Haunted.

Roger looks at her pale face, the razor blade on the ground, and the bath water beet red. April's dead. Roger completely shuts down. The only sign of life being tears running down his face. And then, pouring out of him, his throat clenched.

ROGER
Oh, Jesus. This didn't just happen.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. BROADWAY THEATRE-- TIMELESS

It's an empty stage. After a moment, the entire company of performers moves from the sides to the front. It's somber and silent. They stand in a row under the lights. Then, we hear the warm chords of a song. "Seasons of Love."

COMPANY

525,600 minutes. 525,000 moments so dear. 525,600 minutes. How do you measure - measure a year?

We pan across each young face. Some we know already - MARK, MAUREEN, COLLINS. Some we'll meet soon enough - MIMI, JOANNE. Each person has an air of sadness. Asking a simple question and giving a simple answer.

COMPANY (cont'd)

In daylight. In sunsets. In midnights. In cups of coffee. In inches. In miles. In laughter. In strife. In... 525,600 minutes. How do you measure a year in the life?

The entire company leaves the stage and files into the empty hall. Their voices find a beautiful harmony.

COMPANY (cont'd)

How about love? How about love? How about love? Measure in love. Seasons of love. Seasons of love.

As they leave the empty theatre, a female soloist begins.

FEMALE SOLOIST

525,600 minutes. 525,000 journeys to plan. 525,600 minutes. How do you measure the life of a woman or a man?

EXT. TIMES SQUARE-- DAWN

The company exits the broken down theatre onto 42nd street, which is empty of people. A quiet New York City.

MALE SOLOIST

In truths that she learned or in times that he cried. In bridges he burned or the way that she died.

As the titles and song continue, the company walks down 42nd street, past the Broadway theatres, which play other shows by

RENT creator Jonathan Larson: Tick, Tick, Boom. J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation. Superbia. Half Empty House.

COMPANY

It's time now to sing out though the story never ends. Let's celebrate. Remember. A year in the life of friends. Remember the love. Remember the love. Remember the love. Measure in love.

As the company turns the corner onto Broadway, Mark Cohen turns the other way. Unlike 42nd Street, Broadway is littered with people.

FEMALE SOLOIST

Measure, measure your life in love.

COMPANY

Seasons of love. Seasons of love.

The company is absorbed into the crowds of Broadway. Mark turns the other way and walks into a RENT A CAR company.

EXT. HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY-- DAY

A cold winter sun. As Mark drives the rental car, the song finishes on the radio with a blistering solo.

FEMALE SOLOIST

*Measure, measure your life in love.
Seasons of love. Seasons of love.*

INT. RENTAL CAR-- DAY

Mark turns off the radio as the song and credits end.

EXT. HOSPITAL-- DAY

The building stands sterile and quiet.

SUBTITLE: Cornerstone Rehabilitation Hospital,
December 21, 1992

INT. HOSPITAL REHAB ROOM-- DAY

The room is dark. Roger sits completely still on a small bed. His bags are packed at his feet. We can hear people in other rooms. Withdrawing. Shouting. The sound is SUBTLE, MUTED. After a moment, a nurse knocks and opens the door.

NURSE

Your friend Mark is here.

Roger nods.

NURSE (cont'd)
Are you sure you don't want a referral
for a group in New York?

Roger shakes his head. No. The nurse nods and leaves.

EXT. HOSPITAL-- DAY

Roger walks out of the hospital with his bags. He gazes up at the sun and squints. In the light of day, we can see how different he looks. Pale. Tired. The last year has been hell on him, and he is now inside a tough "dry drunk."

He looks down at the cul de sac. Mark is there with his 16mm camera. Filming. Smiling.

MARK
You look like shit.

Roger doesn't smile. Mark's camera jams. He smacks it.

INT. I-95 DINER-- DUSK

We're close on a television set, playing the sleazy tabloid magazine show Buzzline. The host of Buzzline, GARY MANN, speaks with gravity.

GARY MANN
Conjoined lesbian twins in the Heartland
of America...

Roger is simply gorging on food. Steak. Banana cream pie. He's eating like he's never eaten before. He looks at the television, then turns to Mark talking to the WAITRESS, 19.

MARK
No. You give me 40 dollars, and I give
you 42 dollars extra tip on my Visa.
That way I don't get the cash advance
fees and you cover your 1099.

WAITRESS
How do you know about this stuff?

MARK
My mother knows two things. Guilt and taxes. Plus, I'm an independent filmmaker. So, can you help us out?

The waitress hedges. Not sure.

MARK (cont'd)
Come on. We need to pay the tolls. It's
Christmas.

WAITRESS
Oh, alright.

The waitress pulls out her tip money. Mark signs for the
check. The tip is 50 dollars. The waitress leaves.

MARK
I've been doing this for 6 months. It's
only hard when you have to cover
minimums.

Roger nods. Pretty smart. Then, goes back into his shell.
Mark sighs, thinks. It's an uncomfortable silence.

MARK (cont'd)
You hear about Collins?

Roger shakes his head.

MARK
He got kicked out of M.I.T. Reprogrammed
all the school computers to play "Danke
Schoen" on a continuous loop. They
couldn't turn it off. And every time
they tried, fifty cents was donated to
the United Negro College Fund.

Roger starts laughing. Mark smiles, thankful that something
broke the ice.

MARK (cont'd)
He's coming back. We might see him
later.

Roger, still laughing, nods his approval. Then, without
warning, Roger's laughter turns into a bad coughing fit.

MARK (cont'd)
Are you alright?

ROGER
Just something I'm getting over. Don't
worry about it.

But Mark is worried about it, especially when Roger takes out
a couple of horse pills and swallows.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE-- NIGHT

Hundreds of cars pour across the bridge, some with Christmas trees strapped to the roof. We move above the traffic and match with...

INT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL-- NIGHT

Human traffic. Crazies, kids, couples. AN OLD MAN is sitting on a stool, playing his guitar, which is embossed with silver lettering that spell out the guitar's name: "Lucille." His case is open, and no one is throwing in money. The song he's playing is "Will I?" without lyrics.

Collins passes the man and throws a quarter down. The old man bows. Collins bows back.

EXT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL-- NIGHT

The music continues as Collins walks out of the building onto 8th Avenue. He moves past rows of cabs and sees wealthy and middle class tourists get in and warm their hands. He turns up his coat collar. It's freezing. The wind is brutal.

He passes a young couple reunited and happy and continues down the street. No one is there to meet him. We see him in the distance. A lonely figure on 8th avenue.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE STREET-- NIGHT

We see Collins' shabby shoes walking on the trash that crowds the sidewalk. Gum wrappers. A coke can. McDonald's.

He passes a guy covered in a suit of aluminum cans, riding a unicycle. Collins smiles at this odd sight until a hand grabs him and pulls him into...

INT. ALLEY-- NIGHT

Collins spins around, not knowing where he is. The music stops. He looks up just in time to see...

A BASEBALL BAT. Rise up and smack the side of his head. Collins hits the ground, bleeding. The owners of the bat -- two 12 year old Latino KIDS rifle through his stuff. His wallet is empty.

KID #1
Fuckin' queer. Nothing.

KID #2
Grab his coat.

They take Collins' coat and leave him in the freezing cold. Collins tries to get up, then passes out.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. AN ALLEY-- NIGHT

Collins wakes up with a START. Freezing cold. "How long have I been out? 10 minutes? 5 hours?" He is suddenly gripped by the worst headache of his life. He touches his head. Blood. He hears a noise and looks up.

COLLINS' POV: His vision is blurry. A shape approaches.

Collins cowers, thinking his attackers are coming back.

COLLINS' POV: The figure walks into focus. The sweetest face a Latino drag queen ever had. Behind him, we see a metal sculpture of a Christmas Tree. And lights. This boy looks like and is, metaphorically speaking, an... ANGEL (21).

ANGEL
You okay, honey?

Collins groans. Angel bends down to get a better look.

ANGEL (cont'd)
They get any money?

COLLINS
No. Had none to get.

Angel takes out a handkerchief and reaches out to clean off his head. Collins backs off. Shivers.

ANGEL
Oh, God. You're freezing.

COLLINS
They purloined my coat.

ANGEL
Well, I don't know what purloined means, but we have to get you to a hospital.

EXT. 11TH STREET & AVENUE B-- NIGHT

The rental car pulls up through the noise and throngs of East Village kids and tourists walking around.

Roger gets out of the car and looks around. His expression betrays a lot of history. Especially when he sees a DEALER

in Tompkins Square Park, who gives a dime bag to an A kid, then looks at Roger. And smiles. Roger was an old customer.

Roger turns away and something catches his eye. Adjacent to the building is an empty lot, in which a TENT CITY has sprung up. Dozens of homeless people, some with little kids, are trying to get warm.

ROGER

How long have they been here?

MARK

Since the Summer. The mayor cleaned out the tunnels.

INT. LOFT BUILDING-- NIGHT

Mark waits as Roger walks the stairs. One at a time.

ROGER

What do you mean? What happened?

MARK

She said that since the Gilligan movie fell apart, I haven't been the same. I told her I'm just going to find things that interest me and shoot without a script, right?

ROGER

Right.

MARK

But she said she needs to focus on her work and political causes.

ROGER

What political causes?

MARK

This week, it's the homeless. I forget what it was last week. The only thing Maureen ever really committed to was Paul Newman's Spaghetti Sauce. She said it was the charity, but I think she just wants to fuck Paul Newman. Anyway, she met somebody, so--

ROGER

What? She left you for another man?

MARK

Well--

ROGER
What's his name?

MARK
Joanne.

Roger finally reaches Mark.

ROGER
You're better off.

MARK
Yeah... who needs transcendent filthy sex
three times a day for another 12 months?

INT. MARK AND ROGER'S LOFT-- NIGHT

It's dark and quiet. We hear a key go into a lock. The door opens. The boys are in silhouette, until...

The lights go on and about 80 PEOPLE JUMP UP!

EVERYBODY
SURPRISE!

Roger looks tense. A surprise party is about the last thing he wants to deal with right now. He sees all the familiar faces. Mike and the band. He turns to Mark, who's smiling.

MARK
Welcome home, Roger.

Everyone applauds. Roger forces a smile as he's swarmed by the crowd.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM-- NIGHT

Angel helps Collins into the hospital, which feels like a friendly place. The walls are not sterile white, but pink and warm colors. Children's drawings of people in the community struggling with AIDS are hung next to educational pamphlets and sign ups for support groups.

As Collins and Angel approach the admissions desk, every nurse and orderly they pass smiles.

NURSE #1
Hello, Angel.

ORDERLY
Angel.

NURSE #2
Hey, Angel.

COLLINS
You come here often?

Angel laughs. They arrive at the desk. SALLY, a middle aged admitting nurse, smiles.

ANGEL
Sally, I want you to take special care of my new friend...

COLLINS
Collins. Tom Collins.

ANGEL
Cute.
(to Sally)
And watch your hands. He has HIV.

Collins looks at Angel. "How did you know?"

ANGEL (cont'd)
You wouldn't let me touch your head.
That's why, right?

Collins nods. Yes.

COLLINS
You, too?

ANGEL
You just take care of that head.

Angel turns and leaves. Collins smiles. Quizzical.

EXT. STREET-- NIGHT

Vendors are lined up and down the street, selling everything from vinyl records to lamps. Angel is haggling with an OLD WOMAN vendor, selling coats.

OLD WOMAN
23.

ANGEL
15.

OLD WOMAN
22.

ANGEL

15.

OLD WOMAN

21.

ANGEL

Listen, honey. I got 15 dollars, and I'm having a Florence Nightingale kind of thing. I need that coat.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

The party is in full swing. Shots. Beer. Pot. Dancing. A guy takes a drag off a cigarette, drinks some beer, then exhales the smoke. Other people are fingerpainting on random paper - including old Well Hungarians posters. The loft is so cold, you can see the partygoers' breath.

A song is blasting on the stereo. Jonathan Larson's "Do Unto Them," a cool loud Blondie type number. Mark has his camera out, filming a couple, who are very much in love.

GIRL

Well, I think the key to a successful relationship is knowing that there's always tomorrow.

Her sensitive new age boyfriend nods. Mark smiles. Turns around. And grimaces. Mark sees Roger talking with Mike and the band. The music's so loud, he can't hear what they're saying. A PARTYGOER taps his shoulder. Mark turns.

PARTYGOER

Hey, Mark. Where's Benny?

Mark shrugs. "Don't know." Then, he turns back to see Roger just SCREAMING at Mike. After a beat, Roger turns around furious and leaves through the window onto the fire escape.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING ROOF-- NIGHT

It's almost like Swiss Family Robinson -- all of these makeshift bridges the kids made to connect the buildings.

The snow is falling quiet. Mark climbs up onto the roof and sees Roger on the opposite corner, looking down. Angry as shit. New York City surrounds them on all sides.

ROGER

Did you know?

MARK
Know what? What happened?

ROGER
They got a new singer.

Mark sighs. Terrible news.

MARK
Jesus Christ.

ROGER
They said we had all this heat, and they
couldn't wait. They signed with RCA.
Can you believe that shit?

Roger kicks a beer can. Mark sees a guy through a window in
an adjacent building, playing his saxophone. He thinks.

MARK
Hey listen, you know what. You can--

ROGER
Mark, please. None of your positive shit
tonight. I can't bear--

MARK
What pos--

ROGER
I saw 30 catharsis a day at Cornerstone
from the same people who were going to
cop on their way home. I've had my
share.

MARK
That's not what I'm talking about. It's
like with my film. It's gone. So what?
I have my temp job. We don't have rent.
What does food cost? I can make my own
films. You can do the same.

ROGER
Everything I own is in hock. My meds
alone are 300 dol--

MARK
So, I'll help you. Collins can set up a
computer so you don't need a studio.
You'll find a new band. Come on. It's
me. Talk to me.

Roger is rigid. Silent.

MARK (cont'd)
Listen, whatever it is, it's killing you,
so just--

ROGER
It's April, alright? Does that make you
happy? Should we "share" now?

MARK
I know it's--

ROGER
You don't know shit, Mark.

MARK
She was my friend, too.

ROGER
You don't understand. She didn't cheat
on me. She didn't use. How do you think
she got it?

Mark looks down. Roger holds himself rigid. He's not going
to let himself cry. Mark listens. Sympathetic.

ROGER (cont'd)
If I could just do something, you know?
The whole time in there I'm thinking
about the band, and I thought, that's it.
The doctor said my T-cells are in the
toilet. A year. Two years. Whatever I
have. Just to do something. To make up
for this fucking waste.

Roger wipes his face. Back to angry.

MARK
You still can. You don't need the band.

ROGER
Yeah.

MARK
I mean it.

ROGER
I know.

A GIRL in the building next door is about to walk across the
bridge. Mark sees her and waves her to go back. She does.

ROGER (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

MARK

Hey.

ROGER

You're the only optimistic person I can stand these days, you know?

MARK

Yeah. I know. Feeling's mutual.

They smile, letting out the tension. Roger looks down at the homeless people in the tent city. Mark looks, too. Roger's voice suddenly becomes sober. He can't say the word, "HIV."

ROGER

Who knows?

MARK

Collins, Benny, Maureen... and the band. Everyone else thinks you just got out of rehab. We figured you'd want it quiet.

ROGER

Thanks.

Mark nods. Then...

MARK

So, you want to go back to the party?

ROGER

Yeah. Let's kick Mike's ass.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM-- DAWN

We see the muzak speakers of the waiting room and hear "I'll Cover You" softly in the background.

Collins stands in the corridor. He covers the bandages on his head with a white cap. He turns the corner to find Angel sitting in the reception area, reading Glamour Magazine. On the seat next to Angel is a coat.

COLLINS

You're still here.

Angel looks up and smiles.

ANGEL

Where else would I go?

Angel motions for Collins to sit on the coat.

COLLINS
Someone's sitting there.

ANGEL
Oh, no, honey. That's your new coat.
The lining is brilliant. And it should
fit. You're a size 47, right?

Collins nods. Absently. Then...

COLLINS
Who are you?

ANGEL
Try on the coat.

Collins slips it on.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Perfect. Definitely your color. Do you
like it?

COLLINS
Yes. Thank you.

Collins nods. Angel stops flitting and looks at him openly. Underneath, there is great pride and a hint of sadness. In the background, if you look closely, you can see a man mourning the news the doctor just gave him about a friend.

ANGEL
Oh yes. Me. Ha. I'm Angel Dumott Schunard. And you asked before if I had it, too. And yeah, I do. Bad. And I recently decided that when I met a man with a kind face, I would love him like my father loved my mother if he would have me. That's weird, but it's not so weird, is it?

Collins sits.

COLLINS
Not so weird. No.

ANGEL
Well, you're the first kind face I've seen in a criminally long time. The fact that you're gorgeous is really just a plus. And I'm hoping your big hands are not a false advertisement.

Collins smiles. In the distance behind him, a woman is sitting alone. Wringing her hands and waiting.

ANGEL (cont'd)
You're cute when you blush.

COLLINS
I don't know what to say.

ANGEL
I'd be worried if you did.

Collins smiles. Angel continues.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Listen... I can't lie to you. I don't have much time. And if that freaks you out, I understand completely. But if it doesn't... then I promise we'll spend every day reminding each other that it's possible. You know all those times when everything was so shitty and you just knew there was something more?

Collins nods. And then looks at him with different eyes.

ANGEL (cont'd)
That's who I am. And I really don't want to put pressure on you, but I need an answer. I'm a busy lady.

COLLINS
So... I either leave right now, or I love you forever?

ANGEL
More or less. I know. Fucked up, right?
But there it is.

Collins thinks. Angel reaches a vulnerable place. So fragile.

ANGEL (cont'd)
So, what do you think Tom Collins? You wanna stay? Give destiny a little bitch slap?

Collins smiles. His response isn't sentimental. It's sober.

COLLINS
Where else would I go?

Angel cries. Happy and sad and relieved.

COLLINS (cont'd)
What's wrong?

ANGEL
I knew you were out there.

Angel kisses him on the cheek. Peck. Peck. Crying.

ANGEL (cont'd)
I knew it. I knew it. Where have you
been?

COLLINS
Me? What do you mean me? Where have you
been?

ANGEL
Let's not fight. I didn't fall in love
with you to fight.

COLLINS
I'm sorry.

ANGEL
Thank you. You're forgiven.

COLLINS
Angel. May I ask one question?

ANGEL
Anything.

COLLINS
What do we do now?

EXT. NEW YORK CITY-- VARIOUS LOCATIONS-- LATE MORNING

We hear the high notes of a piano. Staccato. The opening of "You Okay Honey?" Every four notes, we see a different person in the cold, hard at work to pay the bills.

A hot dog vendor. A secretary buying a hot dog. A tired cab driver picking up a fare. A street sweeper. A meter maid. A Chinese Delivery Man on a bicycle. A dignified IRANIAN MAN with a long beard and a turban wearily handing out flyers for the Cat Scratch Club.

IRANIAN MAN
(monotone)
Girls. Girls. Girls.

And finally...

EXT. EAST VILLAGE PAWN SHOP-- LATE MORNING

A boom box on the ground provides the piano for three homeless men, who are singing. One wears a GREEN CAP. The other a RED SCARF. The third a SANTA CLAUS outfit.

THREE HOMELESS MEN

Christmas bells are ringing. Christmas bells are ringing. Christmas bells are ringing.

No one is dropping change into their cup. They look at each other and continue singing.

THREE HOMELESS MEN (cont'd)
Somewhere else. Not here.

Roger passes the three and enters the building.

INT. EAST VILLAGE PAWN SHOP-- DAY

The pawn shop is as run down as its clientele. MR. ALEXI, 50, is filling out a ticket. A WHITE WOMAN, terribly thin and haggard, chews her nails waiting for him and her money.

They don't speak. Mr. Alexi hands her \$100 with the ticket. The woman hands him a fur coat and turns, revealing Roger.

Mr. Alexi sees Roger and gives a quick smile. Roger was a regular. That's all the recognition Mr. Alexi will give.

Roger looks behind the chicken wire into the shop and sees it... a beautiful and worn red Gibson guitar (the one he played at CBGB's). Mr. Alexi sees Roger's wandering eye.

MR. ALEXI
You have the money?

ROGER
No. I need a job.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING-- MORNING

Mark is at the receptionist desk, answering phones, receiving take out food, faxing, typing, playing Minesweeper. We jump cut to show this grueling, repetitious work in a rhythmic manner. Mark's face gets more tired as the day goes on.

"Find SVP. This is Mark." "Find SVP." "SVP." "Mr. Janus, your food's here." "Find SVP." "Thank you, please hold." "God damn fax." "Mom, I can't talk--" "Find SVP." "Pay my student loans and get over Maureen." "God damn border." "In that order." "Fucking toner." "Thanks, mom." "I'll find

him for you." "Mr. Janus." "Find SVP." "Who ordered the stew?" "Collins!" "Thank you please hold." "Angel who?" "Yes, sir." "Love to meet him - her. Life support. 7th and A." "Find SVP. This is Mark." "8 o'clock. Tomorrow. Okay." "Thank you please hold." "You're welcome." "Find SVP." "You're welcome." "Find SVP." "You're welcome." "You're welcome." "You're welcome."

A PAYROLL SECRETARY throws Mark's paycheck on his desk.

INT. OFFICE BATHROOM-- MORNING

Mark is standing at the mirror, holding a roll of wrapped toilet paper. He's alone. His eyes exhausted.

MARK

You know, I have to admit, I've been pretty cynical about these awards. But, being here now, my mind goes back to when I was working at Find SVP--

Just then, DALE, a black dude working in the mail room and an aspiring actor himself, walks in.

DALE

So, which Oscar you win this time, Cohen?

MARK

Best documentary short subject.

Dale checks his hair in the mirror.

DALE

Aim higher.

MARK

How's your new agent working out?

DALE

Bitch sent me out on this photo shoot. Mobile gas is celebrating black history month. How fucked up is that?

INT. PAWN SHOP-- DAY

The place is busy. People shuffling in line. Mr. Alexi points Roger into the holding pen to pick up a silver set. On the way, Roger passes a hocked upright piano and hits four quick notes on the high end.

Later... As Roger fills out a ticket, he finds himself whistling these same four notes. Unconsciously.

Later... Roger hands 15 dollars to an OLD WOMAN in exchange for a banjo. As he carries it back, he plucks four strings that add to melody. 8 notes and counting. Roger is writing a song without knowing it.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- NIGHT

Mr. Alexi is on the phone. His conversation hushed. Roger glances at him, then hands twenty dollars to a THIN JUNKIE BOY, not even 17, in exchange for a CD Boom Box. Roger sees the boy leave and shakes his head. Mr. Alexi hangs up.

MR. ALEXI
I have to go. One hour. You're okay.
Yes?

ROGER
Sure.

MR. ALEXI
If you steal something, I'll know.

Mr. Alexi leaves the store in a hurry. Roger looks around. No customers, so he turns to the holding pen.

He looks at an amplifier. Dusty. He looks at his guitar. He looks at the upright piano. Squints.

We see a quick flashback of him playing the four notes. Then, the banjo's four. Roger's remembering.

He looks at all the instruments again as the eight notes are heard not as piano and banjo, but as Roger hears them - guitar with delay. The beginning of "One Song Glory." Roger's singing is quiet at first as he tries to find the song. When he does, he lets it fly.

ROGER
One song. Glory. One song. Before I
go. Glory. One song to leave behind.
Find. One song. One last refrain.
Glory.

Roger anger turns in on himself as he sings...

ROGER (cont'd)
From the pretty boy front man who wasted
opportunity. One song. He had the
world at his feet. Glory. In the eyes
of a young girl. A young girl. Find...

Roger grabs his guitar. Plugs in. Tries to find the chords. The song is building.

ROGER (cont'd)
Glory. Beyond the cheap colored lights.
One song. Before the sun sets. Glory -
on another empty life. Time flies...

Roger looks at all the instruments, and his mind fills in the band as the song peaks.

ROGER (cont'd)
Time dies! Glory. One blaze of glory.
One blaze of glory. Glo-ry!

INT. SUBWAY TRACKS-- DUSK

A train hurtles toward us as the song continues.

INT. SUBWAY CAR-- DUSK

Mark is sitting, reading a book about the film, "Rashomon." He looks across the car and sees a homeless man, filthy and asleep, taking up three seats. He goes back to the book.

ROGER (V.O.)
Find. Glory. In a song that rings
true, truth like a blazing fire.

INT. MAGNO SOUND-- DUSK

Mark Cohen takes out his paycheck. Signs the back to Magno Sound. Hands it over to the CLERK. Who gives him a key. Mark looks up and sees a vintage 16mm camera. Gorgeous. The price tag \$4,500.

ROGER (V.O.)
An eternal flame. Find. One song. A
song about love. Glory. From the soul
of a young man.

INT. MAGNO SOUND EDITING ROOM-- DUSK

Mark strings up his rushes and runs them through an old Steenbeck. Shots of the party. Shots of Roger.

ROGER (V.O.)
A young man. Find. The one song.
Before the virus takes hold. Glory.
Like a sunset. One song. To redeem
this empty life.

He stops the image on Roger, looks around to make sure no one is watching, and starts to cry. Mark Cohen's best friend is dying, and there's nothing he can do about it.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- NIGHT

We are close on Roger, singing the last refrain from the song. Pouring himself into it desperately.

ROGER

Time flies. And then no need to endure anymore. Time dies! The door.

Roger finishes the song, and all is quiet. He is raw and vulnerable from the release. He takes off the guitar and turns around to find...

A beautiful Latino girl (19) smiling her ass off.

MIMI

God damn, that was hot!

Meet MIMI MARQUEZ. On the surface, Mimi is a breath of fresh air. Underneath, there's something troubled. A kid who needs attention and uses what she has to get it... namely, sex.

MIMI (cont'd)

I'm not saying that so you'll give me a good price or nothing neither. No shit. You in a band?

Roger isn't pleased about his space being invaded.

ROGER

Not right now. How long have you been--

MIMI

That's too bad. You should be. You go to these clubs you know and it's all doom and gloom and I'm so bored and I don't want to be famous, and I'm like sure yeah, I hear ya, but I'd just like them to admit that deep down it's just tits ass and money cock rock, and what's the big fucking deal anyway? Motown was the shit, and you hear them crying about being famous and getting blow jobs? Don't think so.

Roger doesn't smile.

ROGER

Can I help you?

Mimi smiles and approaches the counter. She shivers.

MIMI
Why are you so grumpy?

ROGER
I thought I was alone. Are you alright?
You're shivering.

MIMI
That's because you're gorgeous.

Mimi steps into the moonlight that shines through the window in front of the counter. Roger is taken aback. There's something familiar about her. He stares.

MIMI (cont'd)
Just kidding. It's nothing. They turned off my heat. And I'm just a little weak on my feet. What are you staring at?

ROGER
Nothing. Your hair in the moonlight.
You look familiar.

Mimi looks at the moonlight through the window. Turns back.

MIMI
Hair in the moonlight? You rock.

Mimi's feet give out from under her. She grabs the counter for support.

ROGER
Are you going to make it?

MIMI
Just haven't eaten much today. At least the room stopped spinning. Anyway...

Mimi puts an antique silver pocket watch on the counter. Roger gives her the "look."

MIMI (cont'd)
No, I didn't steal it. It was my grandfather's on my mother's side. He was nice. Got hurt in the factory. Very sad. You know what he said once? That a man with a job is a hero to someone. That's pretty fucking deep wouldn't you say? He died last Spring.

ROGER
Oh, I'm sorry.

MIMI
Thank you. Me, too.

Roger is thrown by Mimi's logic. But there's something else. He keeps staring.

MIMI (cont'd)
What?

ROGER
Nothing.

MIMI
I remind you of somebody, right? I
always remind people of somebody. I have
one of those bodies. Who is she? Come
on. Let's get it over with.

ROGER
Her name was April.

MIMI
Old girlfriend?

Roger nods. Mimi smiles. Roger brings the watch back to the holding area. Mimi stares at his ass. Roger opens the watch and sees a little baggie of cocaine hidden inside. He stares at it for a beat. Then, he turns to Mimi.

ROGER
You gonna hock this, too?

MIMI
(laughs)
Oh, shit.

ROGER
What are you doing with this? You look
like you're sixteen.

Mimi holds her hand out for the bag. Defensive. Shivers.

MIMI
I'm nineteen. And I'm old for my age.
Come on. Pony up.

ROGER
I used to shiver like that.

MIMI
I have no heat. I told you.

Off his stare...

MIMI (cont'd)
Look, now and then I like to feel good.

ROGER
Uh-huh.

MIMI
We had a nice thing going there, and now
you're being the junkie Grinch.

ROGER
All I'm saying is that I pawned a lot
more than my grandfather's watch for this
shit, and I wish I hadn't. That's all.

Roger hands her the dope, 100 bucks, and a ticket for the
watch. Mimi looks at it. Leans on the counter.

MIMI
What are you doing tonight?

ROGER
Working.

MIMI
You want some company?

ROGER
No, thanks.

MIMI
Okay, then.

Mimi turns and walks out of the store. Roger gives a quick
glance to her ass in spite of himself.

MIMI (cont'd)
They say I have the best ass below 14th
street. Is it true?

She turns. He sighs. Matter of fact.

ROGER
It's true.

Mimi smiles.

MIMI
I'm Mimi.

ROGER
Roger.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING-- NIGHT

Mark, lost in thought, passes the tent city of homeless people. He looks up and sees Benny standing by his Range Rover in front of the building.

MARK
Benny? Benny!

Benny waves.

INT. HIP SOHO RESTAURANT KITCHEN-- NIGHT

Waitresses fly by, picking up plates, shouting out orders while the cooks work in sweat. One pretty waitress is on her coffee break, reading BACKSTAGE, circling possible auditions.

INT. HIP SOHO RESTAURANT-- NIGHT

It's a swanky kind of place where everyone looks at everyone else to see if anybody is somebody. Benny is one of those people looking. Mark is looking at the menu.

BENNY
Is that Madonna?

Mark looks, then goes back to the menu.

MARK
That's a man.

Benny nods. "Shit. You're right."

MARK (cont'd)
How in God's name can a grilled cheese sandwich cost 15 dollars?

BENNY
Whatever you want. It's on me.

MARK
Thanks, Benny. Party cleaned us out of food. We missed you last night.

Benny nods uncomfortable.

BENNY
Yeah, sorry. Another investors meeting.

MARK
Stiff?

BENNY
Stiff and rich. But he's interested.
Actually... ready to sign.

MARK
That's great.

Benny nods. Tense. Hedging.

MARK (cont'd)
It's not great?

Benny doesn't know how to say it, so he just says it.

BENNY
I need the rent, Mark.

Mark smiles at first until he realizes Benny isn't kidding.
The waitress approaches.

WAITRESS
May I help you gentlemen?

BENNY
Shrimp scampi, please.

MARK
Grilled cheese. To go. Thank you.

The waitress nods and leaves. Before Mark can speak...

BENNY
Mark, you're the only one who's tried to
set up anything. You know how these
investors are. It doesn't exactly make
me look business-like to give my friends
a free ride.

Mark is speechless.

BENNY (cont'd)
You've had the place for a year. Didn't
you save anything?

MARK
Save for what? Roger just got out of
rehab. Do you know what that cost? He
had to hock everything.

BENNY
I'm sorry about Roger.

MARK
Or his AZT?

That's a very touchy trump card. Temper's rising.

BENNY
I need the rent, Mark. First. Last. And security deposit. I don't know what else to tell you.

MARK
He just lost his band. He's trying to rebuild his whole life. Sober. You should have seen him last night. I don't think he can take one more--

BENNY
That's not my fault.

MARK
But he's your friend. It's three days to Christmas. What the fuck is this? You said we were golden.

Benny's temper surfaces. Controlled.

BENNY
I've been out there meeting these people, and it may come as a shock to you, but even with the best clothes, they still look at me like the nigger who married into the rich family. I finally found a few investors with some eyes as to my potential, but they also see you living free, so I tell them about your potential, and you know what they say?

Mark is silent. Doesn't like where this is going.

BENNY (cont'd)
"A junkie songwriter and a guy whose film fell apart."

Mark looks down. That hurt.

MARK
Is that what you think?

BENNY
Me? No. I started to come to your defense, and that's when they told me about your little protest--

MARK

What?

BENNY

(angry)

It doesn't make me look good, Mark.

MARK

What are you talking about?

BENNY

Maureen's protest. About evicting the homeless from the lot next door. You're her stage manager.

MARK

We broke up.

BENNY

You didn't plan it?

MARK

No. Why are you going to evict them?

BENNY

The block's been rezoned. I'm going to build condos for the studio. Can you talk to her?

MARK

I don't want to see Maureen.

BENNY

We could do a thing where I give you the money every month for the rent, so it looks to my investors like you're paying.

MARK

If I talk her out of her protest?

BENNY

So, what do you think?

MARK

I think you should look for new investors.

Benny sighs. Mark persists.

MARK (cont'd)

I met with these kind of people before. \$20,000 if I cast their girlfriend or change the ending.

BENNY
I'm talking about 15 million.

The waitress brings the food. The guys put on a nice face for her. She leaves. The face drops.

MARK
If you get into bed with this guy, what is he going to ask for next year? It'll never be the studio you want.

BENNY
There are no other investors.

MARK
There are. You just have to keep--

BENNY
I'm not going to let my studio fall apart like your film did.

Mark looks down. Insulted. Angry.

MARK
Just give us a month. We'll find the rent.

BENNY
The protest is in two days.

MARK
Is that all this is about? Why don't you just get an injunction or call the cops?

BENNY
I did, and they're on standby, but my investors would like to handle this quietly.

MARK
What's happening to you?

Benny is offended, but stays calm.

BENNY
I'm growing up, Mark. And since you're the only one in the group that has a chance to do the same, I suggest you start. You happy making these little movies? That's cool. Ask yourself if you're going to be happy doing it 15 years from now.

EXT. TENT CITY-- NIGHT

We hear "You'll See Boys" being played on a cheap acoustic guitar as we see quick images of the homeless outside. Eating discarded Chinese food containers. Pizza boxes.

RED SCARF puts the money he made for the day in his shoe. SANTA CLAUS is looking at want ads in a discarded paper. GREEN CAP is getting warm with vodka.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

We are close on a trash can, burning. Collins is warming his hands. Roger is playing "You'll See Boys" on the cheap acoustic guitar. We pull out to reveal that we are not outside anymore, but in the loft. The trash can is their only means of heat.

Collins stops warming his hands and begins trimming a small Christmas tree, using the Star of David as the angel on top. He nods to Roger playing the guitar.

COLLINS

It's nice.

ROGER

Not bad for a ten dollar special.
Thanks, Collins.

COLLINS

Yeah, your music has a certain Caucasian quality. I can't put my finger on it.

Roger starts laughing. Throws his guitar pick at Collins.

ROGER

Fuck you.

Collins laughs. Then, the door opens and Mark walks in, looking sad and worried. He is the bearer of bad news.

COLLINS

There he is!

Mark lights up.

MARK

Hey!

The two friends hug big.

MARK (cont'd)

I thought I was seeing you tomorrow.

COLLINS
Couldn't wait. You look good.

MARK
You, too.

They let go. Mark throws a doggie bag over to Roger.

MARK
A gift from Benny.

ROGER
How is our young mogul?

Mark hedges. He doesn't know how to say it.

MARK
Good. He's good.

And then from the kitchenette...

ANGEL (O.S.)
(excited)
Is that Mark Cohen?!

Mark turns. Saved by the bell.

MARK
Is that Angel?

Angel comes out of the kitchenette... in full drag. The sweet faced boy is now a gorgeous lady. In an apron. With oven mitts. Mark stares for a beat.

ANGEL
How do I look?

MARK
I love your oven mitts.

ANGEL
I know. A total cliche, right? Well, fuck it. I know how to cook.

Mark smiles. Looks around. Still hedging.

MARK
So, what's going on?

Angel approaches, chattering her ass off.

ANGEL

Well, Roger wants to write one great song, which I think is a lovely plan, but he won't be able to get his old Gibson back for a week or so. He didn't even have money for food until we came along. We brought Stoli, Bananas, and your favorite... Cap'n Crunch. Oh, that reminds me. It was my lucky day today. Today for you. Tomorrow for me.

Angel hands Mark a \$100 bill and hugs him. Mark looks at Roger over Angel's shoulder.

ROGER

My advice... just go with the flow.

MARK

It's nice to meet you, Angel.

Angel lets go.

ANGEL

You too, honey. I've been thinking about your film for two days, and I just can't get it out of my mind.

MARK

You have?

ANGEL

Of course. It's so exciting. Like the Soviet's Life Caught Unawares series.

After that reference, it's like they're old friends.

MARK

You know those movies?

ANGEL

Of course not. Before Collins, I never even heard of them. But influence is exciting no matter what. My advice. Take a shot at your heroes. It's your time now.

MARK

Uh... thanks.

ANGEL

Can I ask you one question or is that too Yoko?

Mark laughs.

MARK
No, please.

ANGEL
Have you filmed anyone you don't know yet?

Mark thinks.

MARK
No. All friends so far.

ANGEL
Then, I think you're going to enjoy tomorrow.

MARK
The Life Support meeting? What is it?

ANGEL
Just bring your camera. We don't want to spoil the surprise. Now, who wants churros y chocolate ?

Angel dashes off to the kitchenette. Mark looks at Collins.

MARK
So, how have you been?

COLLINS
Pretty good, man.

MARK
No shit.

Mark holds up the \$100 bill and sits down with Roger and Collins. Smiles all around.

COLLINS
Do you think it would be okay if we crashed here for awhile?

ROGER
No problem.

COLLINS
Mark?

Mark is thinking about Benny.

MARK
Of course.

COLLINS
Something wrong?

MARK
No. Nothing. Where's the Stoli?

COLLINS
Now, you're talking.

The three friends settle into a night of drink and talking.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY-- DAWN

The skyline is in silhouette as the day breaks. We hear the beginning of "Life Support." Guitar. Piano.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-- MORNING

A FILTHY MAN begs for change. He is ignored. While wealthy folks and guilty kids throw money into a Salvation Army tin while a man in a Santa Suit rings his bell.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

During the school year, this is a music classroom for children. Their drawings hang on the walls, showing their impressions of a life in the city.

Mark is set up in the corner, his camera running as the song breaks into different people stating their names.

VOICES (O.S.)
Steve. Gordon. Ali. Pam. Sue. Hi,
I'm Angel. Tom... Collins.

The group is made of people who have nothing in common except HIV. The names all belong to real folks. Different ages. Genders. Races. PAUL, a generous man, is their leader.

PAUL
I'm Paul. Let's begin the affirmation.

The piano and guitar join as everyone begins to sing. It's a beautiful choral number.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
There's only us. There's only this.
Forget regret or life is yours to miss.

GORDON, late twenties, breaks from the group, speak singing.

GORDON

Excuse me, Paul. I'm having a problem with this... this credo. My T-Cells are low. I regret that news, okay?

Mark is confused. He keeps watching, filming.

PAUL

Alright. But Gordon... how do you feel today?

GORDON

What do you mean?

PAUL

How do you feel today?

GORDON

Okay.

PAUL

Is that all?

GORDON

Best I've felt all year.

PAUL

Then, why choose fear?

GORDON

I'm a New Yorker. Fear's my life.

Mark smiles at the little joke, and then the speak singing stops, and a beautiful and sad melody takes over.

GORDON (cont'd)

Look, I find some of what you teach suspect because I'm used to relying on intellect. But I try to open up to what I don't know.

Mark looks, suddenly moved by what Gordon is saying. His mind brings us to Roger...

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- MORNING

Roger is sitting in the loft. In Mark's mind, he's singing the next line along with Gordon (whom we hear off screen).

ROGER & GORDON

Because reason said I should have died three years ago.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

Mark is thinking of Roger when the entire group takes over the beautiful melody.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
No other road. No other way. No day
but today.

We are close on Mark as the song ends.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- LATER

Paul is handing out xeroxed schedules to all the people in the group, who are too busy chatting to pay attention.

PAUL
We have Beth Israel the 3rd of January.
And ACT UP a week after that. Also, we
need new music, so anyone has any ideas,
call my service. And pick up your God
damn cups people. Jesus.

Mark looks at Collins laughing with Angel. And the other people in the room, chatting and social. Someone taps his shoulder. He turns to find...

JOHN, on the outside, a tough-looking black dude from Alphabet City. On the inside, a prankster.

JOHN
Hey kid... you're here with Angel, right?
Making a film?

MARK
Ah, yes. Yes. sir.

JOHN
What do you think?

MARK
It's very moving.

JOHN
You have HIV?

MARK
No, I don't.

JOHN
You want it?

Mark looks tense until... John bursts out laughing. Angel gives John the "tisk tisk" look. Collins smiles. Mark laughs. The joke was on him.

INT. MAGNO SOUND-- LATE AFTERNOON

We are on the editing screen, seeing the film Mark shot. STEVE, a man in his late twenties, is sharing.

STEVE

What I can't stand are the people who look at you with pity. Like there's something poetic about you dying and you're Jim Morrison on some poster. All I know is that I loved this girl, and she cheated on me once, and I'm here with you people.

Mark turns the camera around to the Life Support group. Some people really listen and nod their encouragement. Others have heard it all before.

STEVE (cont'd)

This is four years ago. And we've all heard each other's stories by now. You know... she tried to apologize to me, and I was too god damn angry, and I wouldn't take it. So, I get a call from her mother last week, begging me to come see her daughter because she's at the end, and can't stop babbling about how sorry she is. So, I go. Figure, you know... be a nice guy. Give her some peace. Accept her apology. Even if I don't mean it, what does it hurt, right?

The camera slowly pushes in on Steve.

STEVE (cont'd)

She was worn to nothing. I don't like to think about it either, but there it was. Her eyes had that far away thing. And I knelt down, and she recognized me... and her eyes hadn't changed at all. She looked like she did at six flags, which is the stupidest place to fall in love in the first place. So, I was there to pretend to accept an apology. But I just found myself apologizing because if I'd just been a bigger person, I know she would have had two more years. I mean, she was guilty about being late for the

(MORE)

STEVE (cont'd)
movies, so I can't even imagine what she
was going through.

Steve pauses for a moment to collect himself.

STEVE (cont'd)
After that, she apologized, and I said,
"Hey. You know. I'm still here. It's
okay. There's nothing to be sorry
about." And she suddenly looked so
happy. So... her funeral is on Saturday,
and when her mother called to tell me,
she said thank you for giving her
daughter three more happy days.

Mark stops the film. Deep breath.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET-- DUSK

We hear the opening bass groove of "Santa Fe" as Mark walks
down the cold wet street. He sees two cab drivers having a
heated argument. And we hear Angel and Collins singing.

ANGEL (V.O.)
New York City.

COLLINS (V.O.)
Uh huh.

ANGEL (V.O.)
Center of the Universe.

COLLINS (V.O.)
Sing it girl.

INT. DELUXE APARTMENT LOBBY-- DUSK

Mark is waiting while the doorman calls up to an apartment.

ANGEL (V.O.)
Times are shitty. But I'm pretty sure
they can't get worse.

ROGER (V.O.)
I hear you.

INT. ELEVATOR-- DUSK

Mark takes a deep breath as he rides. The floors go higher
and higher. 19-20-21.

ANGEL (V.O.)
It's a comfort to know when you're
singing the hit the road blues...

INT. HALLWAY-- DUSK

Mark knocks on the door. A beat.

ANGEL (V.O.)
...that anywhere else you could possibly
go after New York would b-e!

The song pauses as the door opens and reveals an elegant black woman. She's educated, intelligent, anal retentive. The audience might think this is Benny's wife until...

MARK
Hi, Joanne. Is Maureen here?

INT. PAWN SHOP-- DUSK

Angel feigns fainting. The fun diva. The song continues.

ANGEL (cont'd)
A pleasure cruise.

A boom box sits on the ground, providing the bass and instruments. The three homeless men - RED SCARF, GREEN CAP, and SANTA CLAUS - are standing by it, taking part in the jam.

COLLINS
Now you're talking.

On the other side of the shop, Roger is smiling at the piano. Angel is beating on a plastic pickle drum. And Collins is walking around them all.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Well, I'm thwarted by a metaphysic
puzzle. And I'm sick of grading papers -
that I know. And I'm shouting in my
sleep, I need a muzzle. All this misery
pays no salary so...

Roger bangs out a few warm chords on piano as Collin's voice takes over a lovely little melody.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
Oh, sunny Santa Fe would be nice. Let's
open up a restaurant in Santa Fe and
leave this to the roaches and mice. Oh!

Collins' voice finds a rich pocket as Angel, Roger, and the homeless men harmonize. Six new musician friends having a good time. Tapping their shoes - all of which are tattered.

ALL

Oh-oh!

Angel and Collins dance around Roger, each taking their turn mussing his hair.

COLLINS

You're a sensitive aesthete. Brush the sauce onto the meat. You could make the menu sparkle with rhyme. You could drum a gentle drum. I could seat guests as they come. Chatting not about Heidegger but wine.

Just then, Mimi walks in. Collins walks over to her and grabs her hands. Mimi, being Mimi, doesn't resist. She just follows him. Dancing. Roger looks annoyed at Mimi being there. Angel notices. And smiles. An idea forming.

COLLINS (cont'd)

Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
Our labors would reap financial gain.

THREE HOMELESS MEN

Gains, gains, gains.

COLLINS

We'll open up a restaurant in Santa Fe
and save from devastation our brains.

THREE HOMELESS MEN

Save our brains.

Angel grabs Mimi's hand and leads her over to Roger. Mimi sits on the piano bench with him. It's like Shroeder and Lucy from the Peanuts. Mimi sweet. Roger annoyed. Collins and Angel dance together as everyone sings.

ALL

We'll pack up all our junk and fly so far away. Devote ourselves to projects that sell. We'll open up a restaurant in Santa Fe. Forget this cold bohemian hell. Oh-oh!

As the song winds down, Collins turns to all of them. He looks at Mimi. Smouldering. Cool as silk.

COLLINS

Do you know the way to Santa Fe? You know, tumbleweeds... prairie dogs... yeah.

The song fades and everyone looks around at each other. Smiling. Until... Mr. Alexi walks in.

MR. ALEXI

What in your Christ's name do you do when I leave? Out! Out all of you!

The three homeless men leave. Mr. Alexi points at Roger.

MR. ALEXI (cont'd)

You I don't need tonight. Go home. Take your singing people. Go.

INT. PERFORMING ARTS LIBRARY-- NIGHT

Juilliard students and actors are hard at work, watching classic plays and musicals on video. Others are checking out drama books and plays. Chekhov. Shakespeare.

Mimi and Angel are sitting with each other, whispering. Mimi points over at Collins, standing with Roger in the stacks.

MIMI

You two a thing?

Angel looks at Collins. Smiles.

ANGEL

Honey, we're everything.

Mimi laughs. A BOOKISH MAN studying near them looks up.

BOOKISH MAN

Shhhh.

Mimi shushes. Looks at Angel. They both start laughing.

ANGEL

So, what's your story, Mimi?

IN THE STACKS

Collins looks over at Angel and smiles. Roger is pulling out sheet music books and handing them to Collins. The Rolling Stones. Nirvana. He opens a Beatles book.

ROGER

Eleanor Rigby is only three chords?
Fucker.

Collins laughs. A moment.

COLLINS
Mimi's a cute girl.

ROGER
She's pushy and loud.

Collins smiles.

ROGER (cont'd)
Don't smile like you know what I'm
thinking because you don't.

COLLINS
All I said was that she was cute. You're
the one being defensive.

The opening notes of "Tango: Maureen" are funny and sexy and cautious. Roger looks at Mimi, talking to Angel. She looks up and smiles at him. Roger goes back to his work.

INT. JOANNE'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NIGHT

The cautious notes continue. Mark is slowly assessing the apartment as Joanne is assessing Mark. The image glides.

MARK
This is a nice place.

JOANNE
Thank you.

Mark sees posters of Maya Angelou. Georgia O'Keefe. A photograph of Joanne with her mother and father with President-Elect Bill Clinton.

MARK
Maureen said you're an attorney. Social
work mostly.

JOANNE
And you're a filmmaker?

Mark nods. He sees a P.A. system with the microphones and chords all tangled up. He smiles.

MARK
Does she have you stage managing for her
yet?

JOANNE
Oh, no. Well, yes. But just this one
protest.

MARK
Are you having trouble with the
microphone delay?

JOANNE
Yes.

Mark smiles and keep moving. Mark looks at the boxes of soy milk in the kitchen. The natural dish washing liquid. The bowl of organic fruit.

MARK
A piece of friendly advice. Make sure this show is the last one, or you'll never get your own work done.

Joanne nods. Is he being friendly or nasty or both? Mark looks up and sees an entire shelf of NEWMAN'S OWN PRODUCTS. Spaghetti sauce. Popcorn. The works. He turns and suddenly Joanne's deluxe apartment is transformed into a...

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne is in an evening gown. Mark in tails. Mark and Joanne look at their new clothing and start singing.

JOANNE
This is weird.

MARK
It's weird.

JOANNE
Very weird.

MARK
Fuckin' weird.

JOANNE
I'm so mad that I don't know what to do.

EXT. TENT CITY-- DAY

It's freezing. Maureen is directing Joanne and some others to set up a makeshift stage.

JOANNE (V.O.)
Fighting with microphones, freezing down
to my bones.

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne points at Mark.

JOANNE
And to top it all off I'm with you.

MARK
Feel like going insane? Got a fire in
your brain? And you're thinking of
drinking gasoline.

JOANNE
As a matter of fact--

MARK
Honey, I know this act. It's called the
"Tango Maureen."

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Mark sits defensive on the couch as Maureen just lays into him. It's a screaming, nasty fight.

MARK (V.O.)
The Tango Maureen! It's a dark, dizzy
merry go round. As she keeps you
dangling.

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne shakes her head. No.

JOANNE
You're wrong.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Maureen is on top of Mark, just fucking his brains out.

MARK (V.O.)
Your heart she is mangling.

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne is still shaking. No.

JOANNE
It's different with me.

MARK
And you toss and you turn 'cause her
cold eyes can burn yet you yearn and you
churn and rebound.

JOANNE
I think I know what you mean

BOTH
The Tango Maureen!

MARK
*Has she ever pouted her lips and called
you...*

INT. CLUB-- NIGHT

Mark and Maureen have been dancing in a club. Maureen, her face hot and sweaty, smiles her devastating smile and mouths the word...

MARK (V.O.)
"Pookie."

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne rolls her eyes.

JOANNE
Never.

INT. CLUB-- NIGHT

Mark and Maureen are kissing. Mark's eyes are closed. Maureen's are not. She's checking out a gorgeous girl at the other end of the bar.

MARK (V.O.)
Have you ever doubted a kiss or two?

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Joanne looks worried. Mark's story is ringing true.

JOANNE
*This is spooky. Did you swoon when she
walked through the door?*

MARK
Every time. So be cautious.

INT. CLUB-- NIGHT

Mark is at the bar, shell-shocked, looking at...

JOANNE (V.O.)
Did she moon over other boys--?

... Maureen just grinding as she dances with another guy.

MARK (V.O.)
More than moon.

JOANNE (V.O.)
I'm getting nauseous.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

The grinding of Maureen and the club guy has been replaced by Joanne and Mark doing a dignified tango. They dance. Mark leads. They speak.

MARK
Where'd you learn to tango?

JOANNE
With the French Ambassador's daughter in her dorm room at Miss Porter's. And you?

MARK
With Nanette Himmelfarb, the rabbi's daughter, at the Scarsdale Jewish Community Center.

They switch. Joanne leads.

MARK (CONT'D)
It's hard to do this backwards.

JOANNE
You should try it in heels!

Joanne lets go. Mark falls to the ground on his back. The singing continues. Joanne anxious.

JOANNE (cont'd)
She cheated!

MARK
She cheated.

JOANNE
Maureen cheated.

MARK
Fuckin' cheated.

JOANNE
I'm defeated. I should give up right now.

MARK
*Gotta look on the bright side with all
of your might.*

JOANNE
I'd fall for her still anyhow.

INT. THE CLIT CLUB-- NIGHT

Women women everywhere on the night that Maureen and Joanne met. Joanne is nursing a drink at a table alone. She looks up to find Maureen giving her the eye.

BOTH (V.O.)
*When you're dancing her dance you don't
stand a chance.*

Maureen smiles. Devastating. Joanne smiles shyly.

BOTH (V.O.)
Her grip on romance makes you fall.

INT. JOANNE'S APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Maureen and Joanne are getting it on under the sheets.

MARK (V.O.)
So, you think "might as well..."

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Maureen walks through the door, wearing the same outfit she did at the clit club. Mark gives her an angry stare.

JOANNE (V.O.)
... dance a tango to hell."

BOTH (V.O.)
"At least I'll have tangoed at all."

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Their dance is now sweeping. Exuberant.

BOTH
*The tango Maureen. Gotta dance til your
diva is through. You pretend to believe
her 'cause in the end, you can't leave
her.*

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Maureen has her suitcases packed. Mark looks pissed and devastated as she walks out the door.

BOTH (V.O.)
But the end it will come. Still, you
have to play dumb...

INT. JOANNE'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Maureen walks in with her suitcase. Joanne looks so happy.

BOTH (V.O.)
... til your glum and you bum and turn
blue.

INT. BALLROOM-- NIGHT

Mark and Joanne let go and face each other.

MARK
Why do we love when she's mean?

JOANNE
And she can be so obscene...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JOANNE'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Back to reality. Mark fiddles with the P.A. system. He points to Joanne, holding the microphone.

MARK
Try the mike.

The delay works as Joanne is haunted by...

JOANNE
My Maureen (een, een, een, een).

MARK
You're patched.

JOANNE
Thanks.

MARK
You know? It's good to meet you. I feel
better now.

JOANNE
I feel lousy.

Just then, the phone rings, and the machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE
Hi, you've reached Joanne and Maureen.
Please, leave a message. (BEEP!)

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Hi... Joanne. I'll be at the lot, so if
you could bring over the P.A. system, we
can get started on the sound. Okay?
Thanks... Pookie.

Joanne looks shocked. Mark delighted. They look at each
other. Mark smiles. Joanne slumps.

EXT. TENT CITY-- NIGHT

MAUREEN is standing on a makeshift stage as some of the
homeless people watch on. Some confused. Some insulted.

MARK & JOANNE (V.O.)
The Tango Maureen!

She's rehearsing her performance piece... "Over the Moon."

MAUREEN
"Still thirsty?" she asked. Parched.
"Have some milk." I lowered myself
beneath her and held my mouth to her
swollen udder and sucked the sweetest
milk I'd ever tasted.

Maureen mimes sucking a cow's teet and sees Mark Cohen
standing there with the P.A. system. She stops.

INT. LIFE CAFE-- NIGHT

Their food is on the table. Untouched. Mark and Maureen are
in the middle of their conversation about Benny. More like a
fight. How much of the anger is about the issue at hand and
how much is their history only the actors can say.

MAUREEN
I can't believe you're being Benny's
stooge, Mark. I really can't.

MARK
I'm not being anybody's stooge. If I
actually thought you meant this protest.
(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)
That you didn't just want to get on the
11 o'clock news.

MAUREEN
I mean, I always knew you were a pussy,
but a pussy with conviction at least.

MARK
Well, you're the expert.

MAUREEN
(sarcastic)
Dyke joke. Brilliant.

MARK
Look, do you really think doing a
performance piece about a fucking cyber-
cow is going to stop the eviction of
these people? Come on.

MAUREEN
There's more to it than that.

MARK
Whatever you do. He owns the property.
He's called the cops. It's wrong. I
agree. I tried to talk him out of it.
But regardless of what you do tomorrow,
they're going to have to find another
place to live. But if you stop this,
Roger can stay. And Collins. And Angel.

MAUREEN
And you.

MARK
I can always go back to Scarsdale. Roger
doesn't have that. Neither does Coll--

MAUREEN
Did Roger say that?

Mark is silent.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
You didn't even tell him, did you?

MARK
He just got out of rehab.

MAUREEN
Why even qualify it? You always do that.
You take on people's burdens. And you
think you're doing them a favor.

MARK

Like with you and homeless people.

Maureen's not touching that nugget of truth.

MAUREEN

You did it with me.

MARK

Oh, I'm an asshole because you treated me like shit. That's brilliant. That's Newman's Own popcorn brilliant.

MAUREEN

You're even doing it with Benny. You tried to talk him out of it. Do you know how hopeless that is? Do you have any idea what he's become?

Mark is silent. Doesn't like where this is going.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

He's not your friend anymore, Mark. He's not Roger's friend. Collins' friend. Not when you guys got in his way. He made his choice. I made mine. Where do you stand?

MARK

I'm standing with Roger.

MAUREEN

If you went to Roger and told him what's happening, and he and Collins came to me and said stop the protest, I'd stop it.

MARK

But they won't. You know they won't.

MAUREEN

And you know what's best for them?

MARK

They're dying, Maureen.

MAUREEN

No. They're living. You're the one dying.

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER-- NIGHT

The huge Christmas tree. Ice skaters. Gorgeous. Roger stands, impatient. Angel and Collins are staring at a group

of homeless street performers. Three men and two women with a boom box and gorgeous voices, singing "Christmas Bells."

FIVE HOMELESS PEOPLE
*Can't you spare a dime or two? Here but
for the grace of God go you. You'll be
merry.*

ROGER
Guys, I want to get back to--

COLLINS AND ANGEL
Shhh.

Roger turns to watch the performers.

FIVE HOMELESS PEOPLE
*I'll be merry though merry ain't in my
vocabulary... no sleighbells. No Santa
Claus. No yule log.*

ROGER
I want to work.

ANGEL
You're too serious.

COLLINS
You need a night out.

FIVE HOMELESS PEOPLE
No tinsel. No holly. No hearth. No...

A male soloist steps forward, turning his fingers in deer antlers.

MALE SOLOIST
Rudolph the red nosed reindeer.

His deer antlers become two middle fingers as no one stops to give them change. Angel smiles. Delighted.

FIVE HOMELESS PEOPLE
*Rudolph the rednosed reindeer. No room
at the holiday inn. Oh no!*

They all look up as the snow falls.

SIX HOMELESS PEOPLE (cont'd)
And it's beginning to snow.

Angel smiles.

ANGEL
God damn, I love this town.

COLLINS
Let me get this one.

Collins walks across the street to give money to the homeless performers. Roger turns to Angel.

ROGER
If I stay out with you guys tonight, will you leave me alone?

ANGEL
Scout's honor.

ROGER
You were never a scout.

ANGEL
And a brownie... until some brat got scared.

ROGER
Okay. Where do you want to go?

INT. THE CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- NIGHT

Girls, girls, girls. Handcuffs. Leather. Cages. Roger sits with Collins and Angel near the runway, looking bored. A middle aged BUSINESS MAN, sitting near them, makes eyes at Angel, thinking Angel is a woman. Angel flirts right back at him while Collins talks to the SEX KITTEN WAITRESS.

COLLINS
Stoli please. Roger?

Roger shrugs. He doesn't care.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Give him a Sam Adams.

The waitress bends to Angel.

SEX KITTEN WAITRESS
And for the lady?

ANGEL
Cosmopolitan. Please. Those are lovely handcuffs.

SEX KITTEN WAITRESS
Thank you.

The waitress leaves.

ROGER

Guys... no offense, but this is a weird place for two gay men to hang out.

ANGEL

Oh, this is for you, honey.

COLLINS

Yeah. Just enjoy.

Collins and Angel look at each other. And laugh.

ROGER (cont'd)

What?

Suddenly, the conspiracy dons on Roger.

ROGER (cont'd)

Oh. You bastards.

Angel points at the stage. A huge scaffolding is set up. It looks like a fire escape. Gorgeous metal and faux brick.

ANNOUNCER

Gentlemen... please give a warm welcome to... Mimi!

Just then, the place blacks out except for one spotlight shining at the top of the scaffolding. The hard and sexy guitar lick of "Take Me Out Tonight" starts as MIMI steps into the spotlight. The men go crazy. Angel starts clapping, excited. Roger is like stone.

MIMI

What's the time? Well, it's gotta be close to midnight. My body's talking to me. It says, "It's time for danger."

Mimi sings in a raspy voice as she slinks in and out of the scaffolding. On the stage, her girlish real life manner is dropped. She's amazing to watch.

MIMI (cont'd)

It says, "I want to commit a crime. Wanna be the cause of a fight. Wanna put on a tight skirt and flirt with a stranger."

Mimi starts grooving down the stairs. She undoes her hair clip and her brown hair falls. She begins to shake glitter out of it. Roger finds himself watching, reluctant.

MIMI (cont'd)
I've had a knack from way back at
breaking the rules once I learned the
game. Get up - life's too quick. I
know someplace sick where this chick'll
dance in the flames.

Mimi strides the cat walk. All legs. Silhouette.

MIMI (cont'd)
We don't need any money. I always get
in for free. You can get in too if you
get in with me. Let's go...

Mimi walks up to Roger. Throws off her silk bathrobe. All leather underneath. Angel claps. Delighted.

MIMI (cont'd)
Out tonight! I have to go out tonight.
You wanna play let's run away we won't
be back before it's Christmas day. Take
me out tonight.

Mimi drapes her robe across Roger's head. He's not budging.

MIMI (cont'd)
Meow.

All the men laugh and cheer. She turns.

MIMI (cont'd)
When I get a wink from a doorman, do you
know how lucky you'll be that you're on
line with the feline of Avenue B? Let's
go out tonight. I have to go out
tonight.

Mimi turns and strides back toward Roger. From our angle, he looks like a sitting duck.

MIMI (cont'd)
You wanna prowl? Be my night owl? Well
take my hand we're gonna howl out
tonight.

Mimi stands on his table. She bends at the knees and brings her lips centimeters from his. She's egging him to kiss her. He's not moving. It's fucking hot, people.

MIMI (cont'd)
In the evening I've got to roam. Can't
sleep in this city of neon and chrome.
(MORE)

MIMI (cont'd)
Feels too damn much like home when the
Spanish babies cry.

Angel looks at Mimi. Damn. You go, girl. Mimi gazes dead straight at Roger. Angry and sexy and fucking fearless.

MIMI (cont'd)
So, let's find a bar so dark we forget
who we are. And all the scars from the
nevers and maybes die!

Mimi jumps back up on the cat walk. She gestures for Angel to join her. Angel smiles. Looks at Collins, who nods. "Go for it." Angel then looks over at the businessman, who nods fervently. Angel gets an idea. She gets on the stage.

MIMI (cont'd)
Let's go out tonight. Have to go out
tonight. You're sweet, wanna hit the
street? Wanna wail at the moon like a
cat in heat? Just take me out tonight.

Angel and Mimi both dance for their men. Angel is simply amazing. What she can do with two chairs, a table, and three inch spike heels is beyond description. The guys in the club go insane for her.

MIMI (cont'd)
Please take me out tonight.

Mimi and Angel strip off their stockings.

MIMI (cont'd)
Don't forsake me - out tonight.

They unclasp their bras. The businessman is dying for Angel.

MIMI (cont'd)
I'll let you make me - out tonight!

Angel throws off her dress.

MIMI (cont'd)
Tonight!

The men cheer.

MIMI (cont'd)
Tonight!

Mimi's bra drops along with Angel's. We see them from behind. Two bare assed ladies.

MIMI (cont'd)
Tonight!

The men cheer... and then look at Angel. The crowd is stunned silent. Peekaboo. The businessman looks shocked. Angel winks at him.

EXT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- NIGHT

The four of them exit the club. Collins, Angel, and Mimi are laughing. Roger looks pissed.

COLLINS
You sent that poor man to therapy. You know that?

Roger walks on ahead. He's furious.

MIMI
So, where do we want to go?

ANGEL
How about ice skating? Let's be tourists. Roger?

Roger is silent.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Roger?

Roger spins. Glares at all of them.

ROGER
Angel... you're one of the sweetest people I've ever met. And I know you mean well. But... please, do me a favor and stay out of my fucking business.

Angel's face goes from smiling to shocked. And sad.

COLLINS
Hey, Roger.

Angel makes the motion to shush Collins. Roger needs to get this out.

ROGER
You two found each other. I'm happy for you. But please save this love mercenary shit for your Life Support meetings. It takes all of my energy just to stay sober. There's a fucking dealer across the street, and the only time I don't
(MORE)

ROGER (cont'd)
think about going over there is when I'm
working on music. Okay? I don't need
the distraction. Thank you.

Roger turns to Mimi. He wants to say it's nothing personal. He wants to say that he likes her. He wants to confess about his HIV and April, but he can't even get a word out. So, he just turns and storms off.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Roger is in the loft, listening to music at a deafening volume. Playing along. Trying to blot out the world. The music is an angry instrumental opening of "Another Day."

The door opens. Roger turns, expecting Angel or Collins or Mark. Instead, he finds Mimi. Looking quite upset and vulnerable. Roger is beyond angry.

As Roger and Mimi sing at each other, we'll see quick flashes of their past, so that by the end, it's like their baggage is screaming at the other. Every reason they have to not be together and every reason why they need to be.

QUICK FLASHES... Roger is playing a gig. He locks eyes with a girl. April. She's young and bright eyed. They smile.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Roger gets right into Mimi's face. Angry. Singing...

ROGER
Who do you think you are? Barging in on
me and my guitar? Little girl - hey...

QUICK FLASH... Roger and April are walking through Tompkins Square park. It's Spring.

ROGER (cont'd)
The door is that way. You better go you
know. The fire's out anyway. Take your
powder.

QUICK FLASH... Roger sees his dealer in Tompkins Square Park over April's shoulder.

ROGER
Take your candle. Your sweet whisper, I
just can't handle. Well, take your hair
out of the moonlight. Your brown eyes -
goodbye, goodnight!

Roger points to the door. Mimi flinches. Roger turns.

QUICK FLASHES... Roger and April take the train. She drags him to her nice suburban home. She introduces him to her sweet mom. And dad - who gives Roger a mistrusting glance.

ROGER (cont'd)
I should tell you. I should tell you.

QUICK FLASH... Roger doing heroin with some A kids.

ROGER (cont'd)
I should tell you. I should - No!

He turns back around.

ROGER (cont'd)
Another time. Another place. Our temperature would climb. There'd be a long embrace.

QUICK FLASH... Roger and April making love.

ROGER (cont'd)
We'd do another dance. It'd be another play. Looking for romance? Come back another day. Another day.

Mimi steps forward. She's singing a continuation of the melody we heard in the Life Support meeting.

MIMI
*The heart may freeze or it can burn.
The pain will ease if I can learn.*

QUICK FLASH... Mimi is sitting on a sofa. Her father is screaming at her. Drunk.

MIMI (cont'd)
*There is no future. There is no past.
I live this moment as my last.*

QUICK FLASH... Mimi's father slaps her across the face.

MIMI (cont'd)
*There's only us. There's only this.
Forget regret or life is yours to miss.*

QUICK FLASH... Her father is still yelling. Mimi is crying. She looks at her mother, who only turns away. Frightened.

MIMI (cont'd)
No other road. No other way. No day but today.

Roger answers the affirmation with...

ROGER

*Excuse me if I'm off track, but if
you're so wise, then tell me why do you
need smack?*

QUICK FLASH... Roger is fucked up on heroin. April is crying, begging him to stop using.

ROGER (cont'd)

*Take your needle. Take your fancy
prayer. And don't forget - get the
moonlight out of your hair.*

QUICK FLASH... Roger leaves April, just crying there.

ROGER (cont'd)

*Long ago, you might've lit up my heart.
But the fire's dead. Ain't never ever
gonna start.*

QUICK FLASH... April is with the CLINIC DOCTOR, a kind, older man. She turns ashen when he tells her the news.

ROGER (cont'd)

*Another time. Another place. The words
would only rhyme. We'd be in outer
space. It's be another song. We'd sing
another way.*

QUICK FLASH... Roger finds April dead in the bathroom.

ROGER (cont'd)

*You wanna prove me wrong? Come back
another day. Another day.*

Roger turns his back on her. Sitting on the sofa. Shaking with anger. She reaches out to him. Desperate.

QUICK FLASH... Mimi leaves home with her suitcase.

MIMI

*There's only yes. Only tonight. We
must let go. To know what's right.*

QUICK FLASH... Mimi walking around the east village with the suitcase. Wandering and lost.

MIMI (cont'd)

*No other course. No other way. No day
but today.*

QUICK FLASH... Mimi gets pulled into an alley way by a MAN in shadow.

Their melodies begin to trade off, pushing each other.

MIMI <i>I can't control. My destiny.</i>	ROGER <i>Control your temper. She doesn't see.</i>
---	---

QUICK FLASH... Mimi crying as the MAN in shadow rapes her.

MIMI <i>I trust my soul.</i>	ROGER <i>Who says that there's a soul?</i>
---------------------------------	---

QUICK FLASH... Roger cleaning up the blood in the bathroom.

MIMI <i>My only goal is just to be!</i>	ROGER <i>Just let me be.</i>
--	---------------------------------

The clash of melodies builds to a counterpoint. Two sides of the same coin. The same fears. The same desires.

MIMI <i>There's only now.</i>	ROGER <i>Who do you think you are?</i>
----------------------------------	---

QUICK FLASH... April's funeral. April's mother is crying. April's father gives Roger a look of death.

MIMI <i>There's only here. Give in to love or live...</i>	ROGER <i>Bargaining in on me and my guitar.</i>
--	--

QUICK FLASH... Mimi wakes up in the alleyway bruised.

MIMI <i>... in fear. No other path.</i>	ROGER <i>Little girl, hey-</i>
--	-----------------------------------

QUICK FLASH... Roger apologizes to April's parents. They simply turn away from him. Cold. He's weeping.

MIMI <i>No other way.</i>	ROGER <i>The door is that way.</i>
------------------------------	---------------------------------------

QUICK FLASH... Mimi goes to the same CLINIC DOCTOR that saw April.

MIMI <i>No day but today.</i>	ROGER <i>The fire's out anyway.</i>
----------------------------------	--

The song is building. We hear more than their two voices singing now. It's like their past and all that baggage is

echoing. The entire company singing with them as Mimi persists and Roger resists.

QUICK FLASH... Roger goes to the same CLINIC DOCTOR.

MIMI
No day but today.

QUICK FLASH... the clinic doctor gives Mimi the bad news.

ROGER
Take your powder. Take your candle.

QUICK FLASH... the clinic doctor gives Roger the bad news.

MIMI
No day but today.

QUICK FLASH... Mimi crying in the doctor's office.

ROGER
Take your brown eyes, your pretty smile,
your silhouette.

QUICK FLASH... Roger taking the doctor's news stone faced.

MIMI
No day but today.

QUICK FLASH... Mimi walks into a support group meeting.

ROGER
Another time. Another place. Another
rhyme. A warm embrace.

QUICK FLASH... Roger withdrawing in rehab. It's hell.

MIMI
No day but today.

QUICK FLASH... Mimi sharing to her group. Crying.

ROGER
Another dance. Another way. Another
chance. Another day.

QUICK FLASH... Mimi and Roger meeting at the pawn shop.

MIMI
No day but today!

The song climaxes and fades. We see the boom box that Roger was listening to. After the song fades, the tape keeps turning in silence.

Roger is turned away from her. She reaches out to touch his shoulder. He's upset. Trying to hold it together.

ROGER

Don't.

She stops her hand.

ROGER (cont'd)

Listen, I don't want you to take this personal. It's me. I'm disaster. I've got baggage. I know when most guys say that, it's like... their old girlfriend was a bitch or something, but... take my word for it.

Mimi is upset. Vulnerable.

MIMI

So do I. I'm looking for baggage that goes with mine.

ROGER

You don't understand. I gave it to one girl. And I can barely live with myself. If I gave it to another, especially someone as alive as you, I'd...

Mimi smiles at being called alive. Roger trails off. Hanging on for composure.

MIMI

You mean Aids?

Roger is silent.

MIMI (cont'd)

I have it, too, Roger.

This breaks something in Roger. He starts crying. Doesn't want to. It's just there.

ROGER

Don't.

MIMI

I do.

ROGER

Stop it.

MIMI
I told Angel in the library. Didn't she
tell you?

Roger shakes his head. No.

ROGER
Just go. Please go.

MIMI
She didn't tell me about you either.

INT. MOONDANCE DINER-- NIGHT

A quick image of Collins and Angel. Smiling at each other, conspiratorially. While the WAITER, a lanky guy with brown curly hair and a big adam's apple, waits on them.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Mimi laughs.

MIMI (cont'd)
She fucking played us.

Roger turns around.

ROGER
You really have it?

Mimi nods. Her eyes start to well up. Smiling.

MIMI
Is that why you didn't want to... you
just didn't want to give it to... me?

It's the way she says "me", pointing to herself. Roger not wanting to taint her is maybe the kindest concern anyone has ever shown this girl. Roger can't know that. Mimi can't articulate it. But it's there. She cries.

ROGER
What? What is it?

MIMI
Nothing. It's nothing.

She wipes her tears and leans to kiss him.

ROGER
Mimi... I should tell you. I'm not a
nice guy.

MIMI
Oh... you're wrong.

She does more than kiss him. Her face and shoulders and thin arms give everything she has to this boy. It's devastating. Roger is reluctant at first. Then, he begins to be swept up. The kiss is long and smouldering and clinging hopeful.

We hear the beginning of "Will I?" A sad and beautiful song that links everyone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAGNO SOUND EDITING ROOM-- MORNING

Mark Cohen is watching the film he's shot of the life support meeting. Steve, the man who shared the story about his girlfriend dying, is looking right at Mark... and us. His singing is not sentimental. It's sober and present.

STEVE
*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone
care? Will I wake tomorrow from this
nightmare?*

As his voice carries "nightmare", a group of people pick up the melody and lyrics off screen. We push into the screen of Mark's film and...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WEST VILLAGE STREET-- MORNING

At first, it's only one couple. A man helping his lover who is dying. Walking with a cane. Bundled up for the cold. A reverse angle shows Mark with his camera. Filming these men.

GROUP #1 (V.O.)
*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone
care? Will I wake tomorrow from this
nightmare?*

EXT. TENT CITY-- MORNING

The homeless folks inhabiting this empty lot all give each other makeshift Christmas presents. Wrapped in newspaper. A bottle. A discarded toy for a kid. A blanket. Green Cap is copping from the Tompkins Square dealer.

GROUP #2 (V.O.)
*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone
care? Will I wake tomorrow from this
nightmare?*

INT. SUBWAY-- MORNING

The three homeless men - Green Cap, Red Scarf, and Santa Claus are performing for a crowded train. Another homeless man is asleep, taking up three seats. Mark Cohen isn't reading the "Rashomon" book this time. He's filming.

GROUP #3 (V.O.)
Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?

EXT. WEST VILLAGE STREET-- MORNING

We see the first couple on the street and pan to Angel and Collins walking together and pan to a man and a woman walking together - the woman is sick. We pull back to reveal a community struck hard. Dozens of people. Dying. Dozens of homeless people. Begging. Being hassled by the police. Mark drops the camera to his side. His eyes being opened.

GROUP #3 (V.O.)
Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?

EXT./INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS-- MORNING

As the final group takes over the melody and it builds into a gorgeous melting pot of voices and concerns, the image goes bigger than "groups" of people and looks at individuals with their own version of the same question.

GROUP #4 (V.O.)
Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care? Will I wake tomorrow from this...

ROGER is working in the pawn shop as a junkie kid pawns a guitar, which has "Lucille" embossed on it in silver letters.

MAUREEN is fighting on the phone, trying to get a permit for the protest.

JOANNE is watching Maureen on the phone, feeling ignored.

BENNY is at lunch, talking with his investors, trying to convince them that everything is okay.

COLLINS is watching Angel sleep. He looks up at Mark's camera and smiles.

And finally...

INT. MAGNO SOUND EDITING ROOM-- MORNING

Mark Cohen looks at his own reflection in the screen.

GROUP #4 (V.O.)
... *nightmare!*

The reels continue to turn. It's a black screen and Mark's reflection as the camera picks up a HOMELESS BLACK WOMAN in the 53rd Street subway station screaming at Mark through his lens. It looks like she's talking at us.

HOMELESS BLACK WOMAN
Who the fuck do you think you are? I
don't need no goddamn help from some
bleeding heart cameraman. My life's not
for you to make a name for yourself on!

MARK (O.S.)
I'm sorry. I didn't--

HOMELESS BLACK WOMAN
Just trying to use me to kill your guilt.
It's not that kind of movie, honey. This
place is filled with motherfucking
artists. Hey, artist. You got a dollar?

MARK (O.S.)
No.

HOMELESS BLACK WOMAN
I thought not.

The woman leaves. Mark Cohen pans the camera around to a man with a sign across his body. He's known in New York as the PROPHET OF 53RD STREET. An odd old man who shouts little sound bites to anyone who will listen. He's rather hilarious if you ever see him. He looks at Mark's camera and shouts.

PROPHET OF 53RD STREET
Everyone is a lesbian!

INT. BENNY'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NOON

The apartment makes Joanne and Maureen's look like a hole in the wall. It's big. Too big. Tastefully decorated. And cold. Benny looks small in the vast space. The phone rings.

BENNY
Benjamin Coffin.

ROGER (O.S.)
Benny?

Benny pauses.

BENNY
Hey, Roger.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- NOON

Roger is standing in the holding pen with the phone in his hand. Right next to Roger's head is a plate with the last supper printed on it. The chicken wire is behind him.

ROGER
Mark just told me what you said at dinner...

Benny is silent on the other end.

ROGER (cont'd)
We'll see you at the protest tonight.

BENNY
It's nothing personal, Roger.

ROGER
No. It's not. Anymore.

EXT. TENT CITY-- NIGHT

At first, it's silent to us. But we can see the noise. Hundreds of people. Homeless. Little kids. Dozens of police in riot gear. Mark with his camera. Roger with Mimi. Angel with Collins. Joanne backstage with the P.A. system and light board. Benny on the corner, standing with his investors. Signs waving. People shouting.

Fires burn in the trash cans, keeping the crowd warm, and casting ribbons of smoke across the scene, making it look like the place for a showdown.

As we move to the stage, we see Maureen, and the sound of the protest begins to fade up to a deafening level.

MAUREEN
Moo with me. Come on. That's right!
Moo, damn you!

Some of the crowd moo's. Others chant slogans seen on signs. The rest laugh. Mark Cohen rolls his eyes at Maureen and keeps filming. Mimi, Angel, and Collins moo. Roger smiles. Benny is deadly still.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
Yes, moo! When they tell you people
don't care, Moo! When they want to wipe
out an entire tent city of people, and
(MORE)

MAUREEN (cont'd)
watch It's a Wonderful Life on TV, Moo!
When they tell you that there is only one
way to live...

The crowd gets more into it. Mooing. Little homeless kids smile and moo. Mark is filming. Listening.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
... one way to be... when they say they don't have a choice, and you know that they've convinced themselves that they're right... Moo! When they say that you'll never make it big and think that what you do is any less valid because of it...Moo!

While she speaks, we see a whole company of protestors - actors, singer, dancers - setting up a scene on the stage. Three long tables with chairs. And one small table with two chairs to the side. Maureen points at Benny.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
Benjamin Coffin III... for all this and so much more...

The whole crowd turns to look at him. Benny stares at Maureen. He looks like he could kill. Mimi turns and squints. Her face goes COLD. She recognizes Benny.

MAUREEN (cont'd)
This one's for you.

The stage goes black. People look around in anticipation. Mark is rolling his camera. Police speak on walkie-talkies. And then suddenly...

LIGHTS. They come in from everywhere. A huge metal sculpture of a Christmas tree behind the stage. Christmas bulbs wrapped around telephone poles. And from individual apartments around the area. We'll recognize these renters from the time when Roger and Mark spoke on the roof. The guy with his saxophone. The girl who tried to cross the bridge. All are contributing to the show.

Mark Cohen stops filming for a second to look at it. He moushes the words, "Holy Shit," then turns his camera on...

THE STAGE. The company of protestors are sitting behind the tables. Completely still. Maureen is with them. And from stage right, a BLACK ACTOR, who wears Benny's patented sunglasses, enters. Benny looks at his likeness on stage, and doesn't like it one bit.

Joanne hits the play button on the P.A. System backstage. A tape begins turning. And piano barks through the speakers.

People sit in anticipation as the actor playing Benny walks around the stage.

ACTOR PLAYING BENNY
*I would like to propose a toast to
Maureen's noble try. It went well...*

MAUREEN
Go to hell.

ACTOR PLAYING BENNY
*Was the yuppie scum stomped? Not
counting the homeless, how many tickets
weren't comp'ed?*

The crowd is getting angry at the very idea that them being there doesn't matter. The actor points out at the crowd.

ACTOR PLAYING BENNY (cont'd)
*You all make fun. Yet I am the one
attempting to do some good. Or do you
really want a neighborhood where people
piss on your stoop every night?*

The homeless people look at the actor playing Benny. Then, they turn to the real Benny. The crowd is starting to get angry. The song breaks into melody.

ACTOR PLAYING BENNY (cont'd)
*Bohemia! Bohemia! It's a fallacy in
your head. This is Calcutta...*

We pan down from the actors' face to reveal his costume. A sweatshirt with the simple words: "Benny is an asshole."

BENNY (cont'd)
Bohemia is dead.

The piano stops. An organ takes over. It's suspenseful. Sweeping. We crane up from behind the stage to show the whole space. It's enormous. The stage, the cops, the crowd, the smoke. An ACTOR sings from the table. The COMPANY of protestors back him up. It sounds like a funeral dirge.

ACTOR
*Dearly beloved. We gather here to say
our goodbye's.*

TWO COMPANY MEMBERS
*Dies i rae - dies illa. Kyrie Eleison.
Yitgadal v' yitkadash, etc.*

The actor jumps up and lies on the table like it was a coffin. The crowd laughs.

ACTOR

*Here she lies! No one knew her worth,
the late great daughter of mother earth.
On this night when we celebrate the
birth...*

The pipe organ is replaced by piano. A melody we've all heard before... an oldie but a goodie...

ACTOR (cont'd)

*In that little town of Bethlehem, we
raise our glass... you bet your ass to...*

Maureen moons Benny. He doesn't blink.

ACTOR (cont'd)

La Vie Boheme!

The dirge is over. And from the speakers sneaks a cool and fun piano groove. The company on the stage all move to it. First, shoulders. Then, heads. As they sing...

COMPANY

*La vie boheme. La vie boheme. La vie
boheme. La vie boheme.*

The crowd, especially the artists - Roger, Mimi, Angel, Collins - begin to suspect that Maureen's protest against Benny might simply be a fun, campy celebration of what they, and all young artists, go through. They begin to smile, nod their heads. And tap their feet. As Maureen sings...

MAUREEN

*To days of inspiration, playing hookey,
making something out of nothing, the
need to express. To communicate. To
going against the grain, going insane,
going mad.*

Maureen takes her microphone and approaches the crowd. Encouraging them to add their own little riffs.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*To loving tension. No pension. To more
than one dimension.*

Maureen lowers the microphone to a guy in the crowd.

GUY IN CROWD

*To starving for attention. Hating
convention, hating pretension...*

MAUREEN

*... not to mention of course, hating
dear old mom and dad.*

The guy in the crowd smiles. Maureen moves stage left.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*To riding your bike, midday, past the
three piece suits. To fruits. To no
absolutes.*

She holds the microphone for Collins.

COLLINS

To Absolute. To choice.

She moves the microphone to Angel.

ANGEL

*To the Village Voice. To any passing
fad.*

She moves the microphone to Roger.

ROGER

*To being an us for once, instead of a
them.*

Maureen smiles, and the company kicks in with the chorus as Roger and Benny stare at each other. Cold and sober.

COMPANY

La vie boheme. La vie boheme.

Maureen gives the microphone to Angel, who grabs Mimi's hand and brings her on stage. The crowd is starting to dance.

MIMI & ANGEL

*To hand-crafted beers made in local
breweries. To yoga. To yogurt. To
rice and beans and cheese. To leather.*

Mimi mimes fucking Angel from behind. Benny's investors shake their heads. Benny is too pre-occupied to deal with them. He looks at Mimi. SHOCKED. He recognizes her.

MIMI & ANGEL (cont'd)

*To dildos. To curry vindaloo. To
huevos rancheros and Maya Angelou.*

Maureen drags Collins on the stage and grabs the microphone.

MAUREEN & COLLINS
*Emotion devotion. To causing a
commotion. Creation. Vacation.*

Maureen holds the microphone to Mark...

MARK
Mucho masturbation.

The crowd laughs. Mark looks at Benny. It's a long stare. The look on both of their faces is simply a recognition that the friendship will never be the same. Betrayal. Sadness. Anger. All wrapped into one.

MAUREEN & COLLINS
*Compassion, to fashion, to passion when
it's new.*

COLLINS
To Sontag.

ANGEL
To Sondheim.

FOUR COMPANY MEMBERS
To anything taboo.

COLLINS & ROGER
Ginsberg, Dylan, Cunningham, and Cage

COLLINS
Lenny Bruce.

ROGER
Langston Hughes.

Maureen raises her fist.

MAUREEN
To the stage!

COMPANY MEMBER #1
To Uta.

COMPANY MEMBER #2
To Buddha.

COMPANY MEMBER #3
Pablo Neruda, too.

Mimi grabs the microphone and brings Mark on stage. Mark sings and finds himself smiling.

MARK & MIMI

Why Dorothy and Toto went over the rainbow... to blow off Auntie Em.

COMPANY AND CROWD

La vie boheme.

The song is building. The crowd starting to get rowdy. Stepping on a few policemen's toes unwittingly. The song changes into a piano bridge.

BACKSTAGE... Maureen is sweating, wiping off her face, as she barks at Joanne, who doesn't look pleased.

MAUREEN

The mixer can handle a few more mics. I want to get everyone up there. What?

Joanne looks scared.

JOANNE

It's getting out of control, Maureen.

ON THE STAGE... Mark, Angel, Mimi and 3 members of the company are passing the microphone around.

MARK, ANGEL, MIMI & 3 OTHERS
Bisexuals, trisexuals, homo sapiens, carcinogens, hallucinogens, men, Pee Wee Herman. German wine, turpentine, Gertrude Stein, Antonioni, Bertolucci, Kurosawa, Carmina Burana.

The crowd is starting to shout out things as Maureen throws around microphones.

CROWD AND COMPANY

To apathy, to entropy, to empathy, ecstasy, vaclav havel - the Sex Pistols, BBC, to no shame - never playing the fame game.

Collins stands on the table.

COLLINS

To marijuana.

CROWD AND COMPANY

To sodomy. It's between God and me. To S & M.

The Investor taps Benny's shoulder.

INVESTOR
Benny.

CROWD AND COMPANY
La vie boheme.

The music continues as Collins stands and speaks.

COLLINS
In honor of the death of bohemia, an impromptu salon will commence immediately following the protest... Mimi Marquez, clad only in bubble wrap, will perform her famous lawn chair-handcuff dance to the sounds of iced tea being stirred.

Mimi laughs. Collins hands the mic over to Roger.

ROGER
Mark Cohen will preview his new documentary about his inability to hold an erection on the high holy days.

Mark laughs. Roger hands the mic to him.

MARK
And Collins will recount his exploits as an anarchist... including the tale of his successful reprogramming of the M.I.T. virtual reality equipment to self-destruct, as it broadcast the words...

COMPANY AND CROWD
Actual Reality. Act up. Fight AIDS!

The investors are yelling at Benny. We can't hear what they're saying.

COLLINS
Angel Dumott Schunard will model the latest fashions from Paris while accompanying herself on the 10 gallon plastic pickle drum.

All sound of the crowd is blocked out as Roger turns and looks at Mimi. The groove is replaced by a beautiful piano ballad. Mimi feels him looking and turns. They look into each other's eyes, and we see them as they see each other. Beautiful. We hear them sing.

ROGER (V.O.)
You?

MIMI (V.O.)
Me. You?

ROGER (V.O.)
Mimi.

They grasp hands. Angel sees them and then looks over at Mark Cohen jumping on the table, filming and dancing. The look on her face is one of accomplishment. It's a private moment that ends with a smile.

The sound of the crowd and groove comes spilling back as Maureen takes the microphone and shouts out an art form, then hands the mic over to a young artist who fits the bill.

MAUREEN
To dance!

GIRL DANCER
No way to make a living, masochism, pain, perfection, muscle spasm, chiropractors, short-careers, eating disorders.

MAUREEN
To film!

MARK
Adventure, tedium, no family, boring locations, dark rooms, perfect faces, egos, money, Hollywood, and sleaze.

MAUREEN
To music!

ROGER
Food of love, emotion, mathematics, isolation, rhythm, feeling power, harmony, and heavy competition.

MAUREEN
Anarchy!

COLLINS
Revolution, justice, screaming for solutions, forcing changes, risk, and danger, making noise, and making pleas.

Benny is pleading with his investors to no avail. They walk away, leaving him alone.

COMPANY AND CROWD
To faggots, lezzies, dykes, cross
dressers, too.

MAUREEN
To me.

MARK
To me.

COLLINS & ANGEL
To me.

COMPANY
To you and you and you, you and you.

Mark says the final "you," pointing at Benny. He waves for Benny to come and join them. Still hoping that Benny thinks he belongs on the stage rather than with the investors.

COMPANY AND CROWD
To people living with, not dying from
disease.

The company moves forward and Maureen points at Benny.

MAUREEN
Let he among us without sin be the first
to condemn...

ALL
La vie boheme. La vie boheme. La vie
boheme.

Benny turns to the police captain. They speak. The crowd dances, starts to sway.

We match the sway with the pushing between the police and the crowd. Joanne watches in horror. Mark immediately turns on his camera and begins filming.

The company continues their chant of "La Vie Boheme" as Maureen takes the microphone and shouts.

MAUREEN
Anyone out of the mainstream... is
anyone in the mainstream? Anyone alive?
With a sex drive! Tear down the wall.
Aren't we all? The opposite of war
isn't peace... it's creation!

The pushing is getting bigger. Angry protestors and police face to face. Shouting. Drowning out the stage show.

COMPANY
La vie boheme.

A policeman shoves a protestor into the light board, past Joanne. All the lights go out, except for the one's in the apartments surrounding. The song hits a crunch point. Holding on a tense chord. Waiting for release. As the surrounding area goes into total chaos.

A policeman shoves a homeless man into a trash can. The trash can gets knocked over, and the Christmas tree goes up in flames. The snow dances in the air. Angel grabs the whole gang and leads them off the stage. Mark is last, filming the riot that breaks out.

As homeless people get shoved around. And cops get hit with bricks and bottles. Angel tries to lead the group onto a fire escape. One cop stands in front of them. It looks like they're done for until...

The cop takes off his riot mask and reveals his face. It's STEVE. The man from the Life Support Group. Mark is shocked silent. His camera jams. He smacks it.

STEVE
It's going to get worse. Get the fuck out of here!

Angel nods. Scared. Steve ushers them away from the fire escape down an alley. The last to go is Mimi. She turns around and exchanges a look with Benny across the way. Benny shakes his head at her. Roger grabs her hand. Benny sees them together. Roger doesn't notice him. He just moves Mimi into the alley and disappears. We move in on Benny, an idea forming.

ON THE STAGE... Maureen and the rest of the company raise their fists as total chaos goes on underneath them and the police mount the stage and start cuffing people. The tension chord is released and they chant as one.

MAUREEN & COMPANY
Viva la vie boheme!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- LATE AFTERNOON

The aftermath. The door has been padlocked. We move over to the adjacent lot. It's scorched and fenced off with barbed wire. The homeless are gone.

Mark, Mimi, and Roger stare at the lot, then see Angel and Collins approach. The group nods to each other in silence. Then, Angel takes out a blow torch and starts plowing through the padlock.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

The New Year's Eve party is in full swing, and the group of friends is growing. We see the guy with the saxophone. The girl from the roof. The protestors. "Happy New Year" is playing in the background with the lyrics mixed down.

Roger rips down the posters of his band at CBGB's and walks over to the trash can. Throws them in to get the fire going a little hotter for Mimi.

MIMI

I figure I could save up. Go back to school. Or maybe try to dance for real, and I gotta give you props for not being one of those "stop stripping, Mimi" cliche guys. God damn, you know? It's like give me some credit. Boys are fucking stupid. I can't wait 'til you get your guitar out of hock.

Roger starts laughing.

MIMI (cont'd)

What?

ROGER

You just talk so much.

Mimi laughs.

MIMI

Fuck you, mute. I'm talking for both of us. You're just lucky you're hot in the sack, or it's the curb, got it?

ROGER

Yeah. Yeah.

Maureen, dressed in black leather, is standing with Angel, dressed as a 60's go-go girl, and Collins, in a tuxedo.

MAUREEN

So, who are you two supposed to be?

COLLINS

Bond. James Bond.

ANGEL
And Pussy Galore. In person.

Maureen laughs, then looks over at Joanne speaking with Mark.

MAUREEN
I can't take them as chums.

Some partygoers are watching Mark's footage of the riots on CNN. A girl turns to him, smiling.

GIRL PARTYGOER
Mark Cohen on TV.

Mark smiles. Joanne gives him a business card.

JOANNE
I spoke to some friends at legal aid when I was getting her ass out of jail.

Mark looks at Maureen, who gives him a nasty look.

JOANNE (cont'd)
Technically, you're squatters. He can't simply turn you out on the street. It could give you and Roger enough time to get some money together.

MARK
Thanks, Joanne.

JOANNE
So, tell me about this Buzzline deal.

Angel rushes through the crowd.

ANGEL
People! People! One minute 'til the New Year!

The group starts to buzz with excitement.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Quick. Resolutions.

She points to each person.

MIMI
I'm giving up my vices.

ROGER
Write my song.

MARK
Finish my film.

MAUREEN
Try to top myself.

Mark and Joanne roll their eyes.

JOANNE
Not be her stage manager.

Maureen shoots Joanne a look.

ANGEL
Girls. Heel.

Maureen and Joanne chill. Angel points to Collins.

COLLINS
Live.

Angel smiles.

MARK
What about you, Angel?

ANGEL
Oh, I'm not good at planning things.

Collins smiles. The crowd around them starts to chime.

CROWD
10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Happy New Year!

Drinks and toasts and kisses abound. Roger and Mimi. Collins and Angel. Joanne and Maureen look at each other. Tense. Mark sees the couples. And turns around. Alone. A hand taps his shoulder. It's Angel. Mark smiles. They hug.

MARK
I can't believe I didn't know you two weeks ago.

ANGEL
Me, too, honey.

INT. DELUXE APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Benny's crowd couldn't be more different. High class types. Quiet. Uptight. Older. Benny is standing away from them. He just sits there, alone. Thinking.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

The sun is out. Mark and Joanne enter the building.

INT. ALEXI DARLING'S OFFICE-- DAY

ALEXI DARLING (34) is all business and schmooze. She has said the following words so many times to so many different people, they sound completely genuine. And hopefully will get us laughing.

ALEXI DARLING

Hot.

Mark Cohen is sitting with Joanne.

MARK

Uh... thank you.

ALEXI DARLING

Your footage reminded me of my college days. Fighting the fight. Looking good while doing it. Who thought activism could ever be sexy again? Kudos.

MARK

Well... uh... yes... I also have a documentary I'm working on about the homeless and people living with--

ALEXI DARLING

That's what I'm talking about. Edgy. Fresh. That's what Buzzline is all about.

JOANNE

It is?

ALEXI DARLING

Your attorney is tough, Mark.

Joanne smiles.

ALEXI DARLING (cont'd)

Okay. We might dip a little on the tabloid side. But we are a news show. And your client has a fresh eye to bring real stories to an audience. We get real programming. He gets network exposure. Not a bad way to begin a documentary career, is it?

Alexi looks at Mark, who's thinking.

JOANNE
He gets to do his own segments?

ALEXI DARLING
That's why he's here.

JOANNE
And his salary--

ALEXI DARLING
On commission. An escalating rate per
segment.

JOANNE
How much to start?

ALEXI DARLING
Do you really want to talk about price
with your client in the room?

Mark intervenes. Hasty. And funny.

MARK
Yes. Yes, she does.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- DAY

The afternoon crowd. Mimi is standing on the runway as a middle aged tourist puts a twenty into her stocking. She smiles. Looks up. And sees...

BENNY, sitting at a table alone, holding up a 100 dollar bill. Mimi's face goes dark. She quickly snaps back into character, touches the tourist's shoulder coyly, and moves over to Benny.

BENNY
How much is a table dance these days?

MIMI
What the fuck are you doing here?

BENNY
Getting a table dance.

MIMI
Alright.

Mimi motions to another STRIPPER. Benny pushes her arm down.

MIMI (cont'd)
You're not allowed to touch us.

BENNY
100 dollars to talk. Fair enough?

Benny makes room. Mimi doesn't take the money. She sits. They speak different with each other at first. A lot of street and fronting.

BENNY (cont'd)
You guys ruined me last week, you know?
Investors.

Benny makes a hand motion. "Gone."

BENNY (cont'd)
I got nothing.

MIMI
You got your wife.

Benny keeps cool, but the simple fact is that he's not the happiest guy in the world.

BENNY
Yeah.

MIMI
Well, good luck finding another girl to lie to about her, alright? Our shit was over six months ago.

BENNY
I gave you a place to live.

MIMI
And if you'd worn your wedding ring when we met, I wouldn't have taken it. I'm not your whore, Benny.

BENNY
I didn't say that.

MIMI
Then, what? You come to evict me now? I pay rent.

BENNY
I want to know what you were doing there.

MIMI
Look, I didn't know that thing was about you until I saw you there.

BENNY
Would it have changed anything?

MIMI
You try to kick your two best friends out
with no notice after you gave your word.

Benny shakes his head.

MIMI (cont'd)
Alright, things change. Business is
business. But Mark still loves you, you
know that? He's fucked up about what
happened. So is Roger. And Collins.

BENNY
(smiles)
Roger? You really love that bleached--

MIMI
Don't start that shit.

BENNY
What? You think you know him? I've been
friends with the guy for five years.

MIMI
You're unhappy with the wife. You miss
having friends. Leave me--

BENNY
He's going to get back on his feet, and
when he does, he's going to be a ghost to
you. It's all music with him. I saw it
before. I knew April. And let me tell
you something... if she couldn't get
blood from a stone with him, you don't
have a chance in hell.

Mimi looks down. Benny knows her one button. Mimi doesn't
exactly think she deserves much. And that one hurt. She
tries not to cry.

MIMI
Hey, I'm getting sober.

BENNY
So, you don't want to see the shit I got
in my car?

MIMI
You're a cruel fucking bastard.

She stands. Upset.

BENNY

Mimi...

MIMI

Get the fuck out of here, Benny.

BENNY

I wrote Roger half a dozen times while he was in rehab. I got zero back. You wanna argue Mark, he tries to be loyal to everybody. Collins has stood the same ground as long as I've known him. Even Maureen. She's a diva. No fault there. But Roger... consider yourself warned. And God help you if you're falling in love with the guy.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- DAY

Mr. Alexi is laying out the money to Roger. 250 dollars in tens and twenties. Roger looks up at his red guitar.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING-- LATE AFTERNOON

Mark Cohen is on the phone, looking at the clock. 4:58.

MARK

Find SVP. This is Mark. I'll get him for you.

He looks at the clock. 4:59. Starts to smile.

MARK (cont'd)

Find SVP. Hold one moment please. I'll connect you.

He looks at the clock. 5:00. He puts the phone down. Takes off his tie. Pulls out his tucked in shirt. The payroll secretary throws his check on the desk.

PAYROLL SECRETARY

Congratulations, Mark.

MARK

Thanks.

The secretary leaves. Mark stands and starts to walk out the door.

DALE (O.S.)

Cohen!

Mark turns around to see DALE, the mail room guy he saw in the bathroom.

DALE (cont'd)
I hope I never see you again... except on the Oscars.

MARK
How about we'll see each other at the Oscars?

DALE
Best Actor nominees don't hang with Best Documentary fools.

Mark smiles. Dale smiles and walks away. Mark looks around the office, then leaves for the last time.

INT. TECHNO CLUB-- NIGHT

A rave. A fantastic rave. Gay men, gay women, straight couples. Anything goes. Just dancing. And XTC. And ice water. Sweating bodies with "Contact" blasting from the DJ's platform. We move from the floor up to the table where Mark is sitting with Collins, Maureen, and Joanne. Drinking.

MARK
I'll have enough to finish my film, get a new camera, deal with Benny--

COLLINS
And treat your friends to a night out.

Mark holds up his trusty Visa.

MARK
That goes without saying.

MAUREEN
\$4,000 a segment! Jesus Christ!

MARK
It would have been 3 without Joanne.

The group turns their admiration to Joanne. Except Maureen. She's really not liking this buddy buddy stuff.

COLLINS
It would have been zero without Maureen's social irresponsibility.

MAUREEN
Thank you, Collins.

JOANNE
Wait a minute. Where's Angel?

They all look around until Collins puts his ear to the air and starts laughing.

MAUREEN
What?

COLLINS
She's singing.

Sure enough. Angel is up on the DJ's platform with the DJ's microphone in her hand.

ANGEL
Take me. Take me. Take me. Woah.
Woah. A-ha!

Angel hits an amazing high note as the song hits a fat chord. The crowd, including the table with Collins, Mark, Maureen, and Joanne applaud.

MAUREEN
Un-fucking-stopable.

COLLINS
You should see her in church.

Maureen looks at him.

COLLINS (cont'd)
It's a very progressive church.

Angel looks down on her friends. Her eyes find Collins. She sings to him.

ANGEL
Today for you. Tomorrow for me. Today
me. Tomorrow you. Tomorrow you. Love
you. Love you. I love you. I love
you! Take me. Take me!

The song ends with a pop. The crowd applauds, and Angel hands the microphone over to the DJ. Then sits. Looking exhausted. Collins smiles, sadly. It's not going to last.

EXT. ST. MARK'S PLACE-- NIGHT

The A kids are all out tonight. The shops. The food. A great energy to be around. Mimi is walking with Roger. They're window shopping. Pretending they have money.

ROGER
I'm going to buy you that.

Roger points at a lovely necklace. The pricetag reads \$500.

MIMI
That cheap thing?

ROGER
You're right. It's beneath us. How
about that?

Roger points at a lovely dress. \$1,500.

MIMI
I have three of those at home.

ROGER
Okay. That.

Roger points at a pizza place. A slice is \$1.50.

MIMI
Oh, darling. I'm not worth it.

ROGER
Price is no object.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

Roger and Mimi are enjoying their pizza.

ROGER
I figure after this, we'll get a suite at
the Plaza. Some champagne.

MIMI
Stop playing.

ROGER
Alright.

Roger hands her a little box.

MIMI
What's this?

ROGER
Well, I couldn't get you a Christmas
present on time, but...

Mimi beams.

MIMI
Get out. You fucking sweetie.

ROGER
I'm just sorry it took--

MIMI
Shut up already and let me open the box.

ROGER
Now, she's telling me to shut up.

Mimi opens the box. Her face freezes. It's the watch. Her grandfather's watch. She starts crying.

ROGER (cont'd)
Do you cry every time somebody does
something nice for you?

Mimi cries harder.

MIMI
Where's your guitar?

ROGER
I'll get it in a week or so. Don't worry
about that.

Mimi hugs Roger. Hard.

ROGER (cont'd)
What is it?

MIMI
There are some things I should tell--

ROGER
This isn't a confessional. It's a gift.
Just accept it.

MIMI
Roger, I'm not--

ROGER
You are.

Mimi holds up the watch.

MIMI
I found this on the street.

Roger thinks for a moment. Finally...

ROGER

What about your grandfather?

MIMI

Oh, all that stuff was true, but he never gave me a watch. He never had anything to give to anybody. I just didn't want you to think I stole it.

ROGER

Do you like it?

MIMI

What?

ROGER

Do you like the watch?

MIMI

I think it's the most beautiful god damn watch I've ever seen.

ROGER

Good.

MIMI

You're not mad?

ROGER

How can I be mad that I gave you back your grandfather's watch?

MIMI

It could have been his watch. He lost things all the time. He was a very scattered personality.

Roger laughs.

ROGER

And you were his favorite?

MIMI

I was nobody's favorite.

ROGER

Well, you are now.

Mimi holds the watch tight in her hand.

ROGER (cont'd)

So, are you done crying? Because I'd like to show you something.

Mimi wipes her eyes. Smiles.

MIMI

What?

ROGER

Well, since I don't have the money to take you out proper, I thought of an alternative.

MIMI

What?

EXT. CENTRAL PARK-- DAWN

We're tight on Roger and Mimi. She's wearing a blindfold.

MIMI

This is really kinky, babe.

ROGER

Is it always sex with you? Jesus.

MIMI

Where are we? I can't hear the traffic.

ROGER

Alright. Just stand there.

MIMI

Okay.

Roger takes off the blindfold. Mimi just stares. Amazed.

ROGER

I figured I couldn't get you a suite, but the view is fair game.

They are standing in the middle of the GREAT LAWN in Central Park, covered in fresh snow. Not another soul in sight. Just buildings popping up behind the trees. Two small bodies in the middle of a giant field of white.

MIMI

I don't deserve you.

ROGER

And I don't deserve you, so I guess we're even.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- AFTERNOON

We hear the beginning of "Without You," a gorgeous and sad ballad. The bedroom is as scattered and lovely as Mimi is. She takes out her hair clip and gets into bed with Roger. It's freezing outside the covers. They start to kiss.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

Angel and Collins step aside and introduce Mimi, and a very reluctant Roger, to the Life Support group. Steve shakes Roger's hand. Mark is there, filming in his usual corner. His camera jams. He shakes it, so tired of the old thing.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- SUNSET

We see them in close. Mimi on top of Roger. Their lips just touching. Making love as she sings.

MIMI

Without you, the ground thaws. The rain falls. The grass grows.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

The park is no longer snow covered, but budding green. Mimi has an envelope in her hand. She looks at the dealer in the distance, holds the envelope tighter, and keeps walking.

MIMI (V.O.)

Without you, the seeds root. The flowers bloom.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- AFTERNOON

Roger opens up the envelope to find \$250. Mimi points at his red guitar. He smiles. They kiss, and Mr. Alexi screams at Roger to get back to work.

MIMI (V.O.)

The children play.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- MORNING

A different day. The same position. Mimi on top of Roger.

MIMI

The stars gleam. The poets dream.

INT. BENNY'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NOON

We are close on a television stationary envelope that's been opened. We move over to a check made out to Benny for \$4,000. Benny looks at the signature... Mark Cohen.

MIMI (V.O.)
The eagles fly... without you.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Roger is playing his red guitar, serenading Mimi. The look on her face watching him is completely open and glowing.

MIMI (V.O.)
The Earth turns. The sun burns. But I die...

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Angel is in bed, coughing like hell, and shaking with fever. Collins holds him.

MIMI (V.O.)
... without you.

INT. MAGNO SOUND-- DUSK

The CLERK takes the gorgeous vintage camera with the price tag of \$4,500 off the shelf and hands it to Mark in exchange for a check. Mark runs the camera. No jams. It's like music to his ears.

MIMI (V.O.)
Without you, the breeze warms.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM-- NIGHT

Collins is with the whole group as Angel comes out of the corridor, looking much better. Smiles all around, especially when Mimi produces a lingerie teddy for Angel.

MIMI (V.O.)
The girl smiles. The cloud moves.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- MORNING

Mark and Alexi Darling are arguing over a cut on the video tape editing screen. If we look closely at the image, it's not of homeless people or folks living with AIDS.

MIMI (V.O.)
Without you, the tides change.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

Mimi is singing at the Life Support meeting. Angel, who is looking worse again, watches her, smiling. Roger is on his red guitar. He looks at the corner where Mark is usually set up, filming. Mark isn't there. New camera or not.

MIMI (V.O.)
The boys run. The oceans crash.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Roger is engrossed in his sheet music books. Mimi is trying to get him to go out. He turns away from her.

MIMI (V.O.)
The crowd roars. The days soar.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

Mimi, looking sad on a bench, is approached by the dealer.

MIMI (V.O.)
The babies cry... without you.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Roger is screaming at Mimi, holding a baggie of dope in his hand. Mimi is crying. We can see her say, "I'm sorry." The fight breaks, and Roger holds her.

MIMI (V.O.)
The moon glows. The river flows.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

Mimi and Roger are making love and making up after the fight. Same position. Same view. But the room is no longer cold, but stifling hot in summertime. A fan runs.

MIMI
But I die without you.

INT. MIMI'S PARENT'S APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Roger is having dinner with her family. Mimi's father is giving him the eye. Mimi's mother is being hospitable.

ROGER (V.O.)
The world revives.

MIMI (V.O.)
Colors renew.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK-- DAWN

The park is magnificent big green. A hot summer day. Mimi and Roger are on a picnic bench with Maureen and Joanne. A girl gives Maureen the eye. Maureen smiles. Joanne notices.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
But I know blue. Only blue.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- NIGHT

Mark is up late, editing tape. We pan over to see his new 16mm camera. Untouched.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
Lonely blue. Within me, blue.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

Roger is working on the piano. Collins walks into the group. Mimi looks at him. He shakes his head. Angel is too sick to be there.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
Without you.

INT. COLLINS AND ANGEL'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Mimi is sitting with Angel. Angel is so sick and pale, but she's still Angel. Making Mimi laugh.

MIMI (V.O.)
Without you, the hand gropes. The ear
hears. The pulse beats.

EXT. CLUB-- NIGHT

We see a sign that reads "OPEN MIC NIGHT."

ROGER (V.O.)
Without you...

INT. CLUB-- NIGHT

Roger is on the stage with his red guitar, singing alone. Mimi, Maureen, Joanne, and Collins are watching him. Applauding wildly.

ROGER
The eyes gaze. The legs walk. The
lungs breathe.

INT. CLUB-- LATER

Roger is talking to a lot of people at the club. Managers. Booking agents. Management. Maureen, Collins, and Joanne all slap his shoulder and leave. Mimi is left, waiting. She checks her grandfather's watch.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
The mind churns. The heart yearns.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- NIGHT

Mark is looking at the clock. 3am. He rubs his eyes, tired, like he used to at his temp job.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
The tears dry. Without you.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- NIGHT

The clock reads 3:30am. Roger is working on the upright piano, not even paying attention to the time.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
Life goes on.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

The clock reads 3:30am. Mimi is alone, doing dope and feeling shitty and guilty.

MIMI & ROGER (V.O.)
But I'm gone. 'Cause I die.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- AFTERNOON

Roger is on top of Mimi. Making love.

ROGER
Without you.

INT. COLLINS AND ANGEL'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Collins holds Angel, having trouble breathing.

ROGER (V.O.)
Without you.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM-- MORNING

The classroom is empty. The image glides. Silent.

ROGER & MIMI (V.O.)
Without you.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB BACKSTAGE-- NIGHT

While the girls run around for their costumes, Mimi looks at her baggie. It's empty. She's completely desperate.

MIMI (V.O.)
Without you.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- NIGHT

Mimi is walking the runway. Hurting bad. She looks up and sees Benny sitting there. They exchange a look. The song ends to applause coming from...

INT. TELEVISION SOUND STAGE-- DAY

An APPLAUSE sign and off screen clapping and screaming. Mark Cohen looks at the bleachers full of people in the studio audience. He turns his attention to the set of BUZZLINE and it's host GARY MANN.

GARY MANN
We're back... White Supremacists. Who are they? Where are they? Why are they? What are they wearing?

Mark shakes his head and walks away from the stage.

INT. ALEXI DARLING'S OFFICE-- DAY

Alexi is behind the desk. Mark in the visitor's seat.

ALEXI DARLING
Mark, I promise.

MARK
You've been promising for 8 months.

ALEXI DARLING
The evangelist piece just fell in our laps.

MARK
What? He's a crook. Surprise. Surprise. I'm talking about a feature about the guy I used to work with.

ALEXI DARLING
The black guy?

MARK

The actor. And all the shit he has to go through. You know... Mobile Gas. Black History Month.

ALEXI DARLING

Mobile is one of our sponsors.

MARK

I want to do a real story.

ALEXI DARLING

Mark. Just do the evangelist piece and then you can start on the thing about your friend.

MARK

With the part about Mobile gas?

Alexi Darling just gives him a look. Shrugs her shoulders.

INT. CLUB-- NIGHT

A banner proclaims it's jam night. Roger is on his guitar. Mark, Joanne, and Maureen are sitting, not watching him perform. A few spare musicians are pitching in. The piece is the opening of "Take Me or Leave Me."

JOANNE

I'm sorry, Mark. I don't know what to tell you. You signed the contract.

Maureen rolls her eyes at the two of them. She notices a guy checking her out. She makes eyes back.

MARK

Yes. I did. To do my own segments. But they never reach air the way I want. And she keeps throwing me assignments they need my "freshness" for, but I'm not feeling too fresh these days.

MAUREEN

Try a douche.

JOANNE

You're crude.

MAUREEN

And you two are fucking boring. Why don't you two just get an accountant's ledger, a bottle of champagne, and go at it?

JOANNE

Well, why don't you invite that guy you just made eyes at to join in?

MARK

Guys. People are starting to stare.

As mentioned, the club is starting to look at them.

MAUREEN

And how fucked up is it for you to keep helping my ex-boyfriend?

JOANNE

He needed a lawyer. I figured I could help out since you almost got them evicted.

Maureen stands and roars.

MAUREEN

THAT'S IT, MISS IVY LEAGUE!

JOANNE

What?

MAUREEN

Ever since New Year's I haven't said boo. I didn't pierce my nipples because it grossed you out. I didn't stay and dance at the Clit Club that night, 'cause you wanted to go home...

JOANNE

You were flirting with the woman in rubber.

MAUREEN

That's what this is about?? There will always be women in rubber FLIRTING WITH ME!! Give me a break.

Maureen begins singing along with the instrumental tune Roger and the musicians are jamming. It's sexy and coy.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

Every single day, I walk down the street,
I hear people say, "Baby, so sweet."

Joanne looks around. Embarrassed.

JOANNE

Would you sit down?

MAUREEN

*Ever since puberty, everybody stares at
me. Boys, girls. I can't help it, baby.*

Maureen starts moving around the room. Joanne is mortified. The crowd, especially the guys, are digging this cat fight.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*So be kind. Don't lose your mind. Just
remember that I'm your baby.*

Maureen goes back and stands on Joanne's table.

JOANNE

(to the crowd)

She's chemically imbalanced.

MAUREEN

*Take me for what I am! Who I was meant
to be. And if you give a damn. Take me
baby or leave me. Take me baby or leave
me.*

Maureen kisses Joanne and turns. The crowd hoots.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*A tiger in a cage can never see the sun.
This diva needs her stage. Baby, let's
have fun!*

Maureen turns back. Joanne's embarrassment is starting to turn into an ugly kind of rage.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*You are the one I choose. Folks'd kill
to fill your shoes. You love the
limelight too now, baby!*

Maureen starts to pull up her shirt.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*So be mine, but don't waste my time.
Crying, "Oh, honeybear, are you still my
my my baby?"*

JOANNE

Don't you fucking dare.

Maureen stops right under her chest.

MAUREEN

*Take me for what I am. Who I was meant
to be. And if you give a damn. Take me
baby or leave me.*

Maureen starts moving around, flirting with everybody.
Always looking at Joanne.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

*No way - can I be what I'm not! But
hey, don't you want your girl hot!?*

The guy Maureen's flirting with nods at Joanne.

GUY

You do. Trust me.

Joanne gives the guy a look of death.

MAUREEN

*Don't fight. Don't lose your head
'cause every night - who's in your bed?*

Maureen gets right up in Joanne's face.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

Who's in your bed, baby?

She stops singing for a second.

MAUREEN (cont'd)

Kiss, Pookie.

JOANNE

It won't work.

MAUREEN

Come on, chicken.

Joanne stands. Mark shakes his head. Starting to feel badly
about the tension he created. Joanne starts singing.

JOANNE

*I look before I leap. I love margins
and discipline. I make lists in my
sleep. Baby, what's my sin?*

Joanne gets right in Maureen's face and chest. Is this a
fight or a mating ritual? The guy's in the club don't care.

JOANNE (cont'd)

*Never quit. I follow through. I hate
mess, but I love you. What to do with my
(MORE)*

JOANNE (cont'd)
impromptu baby! So be wise 'cause this
girl satisfies. You've got a prize, but
don't compromise. You're one lucky baby.

Joanne starts wailing. Her voice is fucking amazing. The kind of notes that only someone who's been kept under wraps for a long time can produce.

JOANNE (cont'd)
Take me for what I am!

Maureen looks at the crowd. Speaks.

MAUREEN
A control freak.

JOANNE
Who I was meant to be!

MAUREEN
A snob. Yet, over-attentive.

JOANNE
And if you give a damn!

Mark looks at Roger, who shrugs and keeps playing.

MAUREEN
A lovable, droll geek.

JOANNE
Take me baby or leave me!

MAUREEN
And anal retentive!

They square off. The people in the club order more drinks.

MAUREEN & JOANNE
That's it!

JOANNE
The straw that breaks my back!

MAUREEN & JOANNE
I quit!

JOANNE
Unless you take it back.

MAUREEN & JOANNE
Women!

MAUREEN
What's it about them?

MAUREEN & JOANNE
Can't live with them or without them!

They claw at each other, trying to out diva, out sexy, out something each other. The first one who blinks...

MAUREEN & JOANNE (cont'd)
Take me for what I am. Who I was meant to be. And if you give a damn. Take me baby or leave me. Take me baby or leave me. Guess I'm leavin'. I'm gone!

Maureen and Joanne sit back to back. The song ends. The crowd goes insane with applause.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-- DAY

Close on the morphine drip. And the heart monitor. Beep. Beep. Tapping. Angel, looking terribly weak and pale as we've ever seen him, is laughing.

ANGEL
They did what?

Collins is smiling, wiping off Angel's forehead.

COLLINS
Broke up.

ANGEL
During a jam session. God bless them. I give the separation a week.

Angel starts laughing, then coughing. Collins reaches for the nurse button. Angel stops his hand. Collins continues wiping off Angel's forehead.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Tell me about the rest of them.

COLLINS
You can ask them yourself. They're coming by tomorrow.

ANGEL
Yeah?

COLLINS
What do you think? They love you.

Angel turns away. Collins looks confused. Especially when he realizes Angel is crying.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Angel? Hey.

Collins tries to comfort him. Angel is terribly upset.

ANGEL
Make sure Roger writes his song. And Mark finishes his film. And Mimi gets her shit together. All of their resolutions. Alright?

COLLINS
Sure.

ANGEL
I mean it. It's important.

COLLINS
Okay.

ANGEL
Because they're good people, and half of them don't know it.

COLLINS
What about the other half?

ANGEL
They're just fucked up.

Collins laughs.

COLLINS
And what about you?

Angel starts really crying.

COLLINS (cont'd)
What's wrong? Angel.

ANGEL
I thought I was going to be alone.

Collins holds her hand. Tries to be strong.

ANGEL (cont'd)

Sometimes, I wake up, and I think that you left that night in the hospital.

COLLINS

Hey.

ANGEL

Or that I didn't see you in the alley. Or you'd taken a later bus. Do you know what I was doing that night?

COLLINS

What?

ANGEL

Renting a video. I was on my way to rent a video. You know why?

Collins is starting to get upset. He squeezes Angel's hand.

ANGEL (cont'd)

All my friends were gone, and I had no one to talk to. Not Life Support talk. But talk talk, you know. I mean, I was so desperate, I almost called my father, and God knows I was never the apple of his eye. So, I was on my way to rent fucking "Die Hard."

Collins laughs in spite of himself.

ANGEL (cont'd)

Don't laugh. I really like that movie.

COLLINS

So do I.

ANGEL

It was really good, wasn't it?

COLLINS

Yeah.

Angel suddenly brightens. Back to herself.

ANGEL

You know, maybe we can get it tomorrow. It beats that arty shit Mark likes. Or maybe a travel video. You know I've never left the city? Except Philadelphia on a field trip once. It would be good to see some other places.

COLLINS

How about we get on a plane to London?
Take a picture at Abbey Road Studios.

ANGEL

On the cross walk?

COLLINS

Of course.

ANGEL

I love that tourist stuff.

Collins strokes Angel's hair, trying to get him to fall asleep. Tears are running down his face.

COLLINS

Yeah, we'll see the Eifel Tower. And the Pyramids. And the Sistine Chapel. And the Hollywood sign. And Santa Fe.

ANGEL

Collins...

COLLINS

Yeah.

ANGEL

I want you to take something with you, okay?

Collins is beside himself. He nods.

ANGEL (cont'd)

I'm 22 years old, and I haven't known a lot of blessings. But I have known you. And let me tell you something... I wouldn't trade you for fifty years.

Collins takes a moment to collect himself.

COLLINS

You wouldn't?

ANGEL

Why? You know someone?

Collins laughs.

ANGEL (cont'd)

I didn't tell you to stop planning our vacation.

Collins laughs. And cries.

COLLINS
I'm sorry. Where were we? Santa Fe?

ANGEL
Yeah.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME-- AFTERNOON

The leaves are starting to change colors. A family, dressed in black suits, dresses, and veils, hug one another.

INT. FUNERAL HOME-- AFTERNOON

An old man, dressed in black, consoles a woman, and they both turn and look at something. They shake their heads in disapproval. We slowly move over to what they're looking at.

Our group of young people, dressed in their normal tattered clothes, consoling each other in one of the viewing rooms.

INT. VIEWING ROOM-- AFTERNOON

The UNDERTAKER, a man with a kind and peaceful face, is standing with Collins and Mark by the closed coffin.

UNDERTAKER
It's time we move to the church.

Collins nods sadly. Mark comforts him.

INT. CHAPEL-- AFTERNOON

The congregation is made up of all the people we've seen at the parties. They are silent, straining to hold in sobs as some of Angel's friends say a few words.

MIMI
It's right that it's Halloween, because it was her favorite holiday. I remember that time the skinhead was bothering her and she said she was more of a man than he'd ever be and more of a woman than he'd ever get...

The congregation stifles a laugh. Roger is too grim to laugh. Mark steps forward.

MARK
... and then there was the time he walked up to this group of tourists - and they were petrified because, A - they were
(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

obviously lost and B - had probably never spoken to a drag queen before in their lives... and he... SHE just offered to escort them out of Alphabet City... And then she let them take a picture with her - and then she said she'd help 'em find the Statue of Liberty.

Again, a laugh. Mimi holds Roger's hand, trying to console him. He's very distant. Maureen steps forward.

MAUREEN

... so much more original than any of us - I heard the story of the time you found an old tablecloth on the street and made a dress - and next year, sure enough - they were mass producing them as the Gap. You said that last time how you were lucky that we were all friends - but it was us, baby, who were the lucky ones.

The congregation lowers its head. Joanne looks at Maureen. All of their bickering is losing importance at the moment, especially when Collins steps forward. The crowd is silent.

Collins tries to speak, but can't. He looks over at the Life Support piano player, who nods, and starts playing "I'll Cover You (reprise)." Collins starts to sing. Softly.

COLLINS

*Live in my house. I'll be your shelter.
Just pay me back with one thousand
kisses. Be my lover, and I'll cover you.*

Mimi looks at Roger. The guilt and grief on her face is deafening.

COLLINS (cont'd)

*Open your door, I'll be your tenant.
Don't got much baggage to lay at your
feet, but sweet kisses I've got to
spare. I'll be there. I'll cover you.*

Mark, his face rigid and grim, looks at Maureen sitting apart from Joanne. He looks down.

COLLINS (cont'd)

*I think they meant it when they said you
can't buy love. Now, I know you can
rent it, a new lease you were, my love,
on life.*

Maureen looks over at Joanne.

COLLINS (cont'd)
*All my life, I've longed to discover
 something as true as this is.*

Slowly, the congregation begins to join in. It begins with the Life Support group. And Steve, crying.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
*So with a thousand sweet
 kisses, I'll cover you.*

COLLINS
*If you're cold, and you're
 lonely.*

More people join the Life Support Group.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
*With a thousand sweet
 kisses, I'll cover you.*

COLLINS
You've got one nickel only.

Mimi starts singing. Roger is keeping rigid.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
*With a thousand sweet
 kisses, I'll cover you.*

COLLINS
*When you're worn out and
 tired.*

Maureen and Joanne both join in. As does Mark.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
*With a thousand sweet
 kisses, I'll cover you.*

COLLINS
When your heart has expired.

After a slow build, the entire company joins in. Except Roger. It's all hitting too close for him as he looks around the church. At Collins. And at the faded purple spot on Mimi's hand.

COMPANY
*525,600 minutes. 525,000 moments so
 dear. 525,600 minutes. 525,000 measure
 a year. Oh, lover. I'll cover you.
 Oh, lover. I'll cover you.*

Collins voice booms.

COLLINS & COMPANY
Oh, lover. I'll cover you. Oh, lover.

Roger gets up out of his seat, too upset to deal, and leaves the church. Mimi and Mark watch him go.

COLLINS
I'll cover you.

COMPANY
525,600 minutes. 525,000 seasons...
of... love!

COLLINS
I'll cover you!

The song peaks and ends. Roger leaves the church.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT-- DUSK

The congregation is starting to file out, lighting cigarettes, talking about where they're going to go next. Mimi walks out of the door and her face goes ashen as she sees Roger standing with... BENNY, near his Range Rover.

Roger and Benny are shaking hands. The look on Benny's face is a mixture of things. Sympathy for Collins first.

ROGER
It's nice of you to come, Benny. It'll mean a lot to Collins.

BENNY
Hey.

ROGER
How did you hear about it? Mark call you?

BENNY
No.

Roger is confused until he turns back and sees Mimi's face. Her look of guilt is all the information he'll need. Roger is speechless. Mimi's eyes fill with tears.

INT. CHURCH-- DUSK

Mark hugs Collins. No words spoken. Mark just smiles sadly, and turns to leave the church. He passes Maureen and Joanne, who are now sitting next to each other in the pews. They look up at Mark and nod condolence. Mark smiles back, sadly.

As Mark passes the last row, Collins looks to his right and sees a MIDDLE AGED MAN, sitting alone. The man is wearing a suit. He couldn't look more out of place. Or confused.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT-- DUSK

Mark walks out to find Mimi crying, and Roger just screaming at her. A crowd is forming around them.

ROGER

It's true, you've been seeing this--

BENNY

Go ahead and say it!

MIMI

(to Benny)

Stay out of this.

Mark doesn't know what the hell is going on.

ROGER

For fucking what? Drugs? Money?

MIMI

You're never there.

ROGER

So, it's my fault you're fucking this
piece of shit?

Mark is shocked. Benny is now furious.

MIMI

It was one time, and I--

ROGER

And that makes it better?

MIMI

I didn't fuck him.

ROGER

Then, what did you do?

BENNY

Other things.

Silence. Roger closes his eyes. All of his temper goes inside along with the rest of him. He's ice. He looks at Mimi, who's just mortified.

MIMI

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

ROGER

Why are you sorry, Mimi? You finally
found someone you deserve.

The second he said it, he wishes he could take it back. Mimi looks like she's just been slapped. She stops crying. Roger can't deal. He walks away.

MIMI

Hey!

Roger turns to face Mimi, who is furious.

MIMI (cont'd)

You think that? You really think that?
Then, I'm glad. You hear me, you cold,
selfish bastard? I'm fucking glad.
There... I gave you an excuse, you
chicken shit. Walk away.

Mimi runs off. Roger is struck silent. He doesn't chase after her. He just turns to Benny, who suddenly looks terrible. It might have been a game. It might have been revenge. It might have been that he was lonely. But Benny had no idea the damage he would cause with this. None.

He makes the motion to apologize, but Roger just turns and leaves. Benny then turns to find Mark looking at him. Shocked and heart-broken.

BENNY

Mark I--

MARK

At Angel's funeral, Benny? I mean, I know you didn't know her, but...

BENNY

Look, I came to pay respects to Collins and see if I could help pay for the--

MARK

We don't need your charity.

BENNY

I know you don't, but--

MARK

We never did.

BENNY

I'm sorry, Mark.

MARK

You know what I was hoping? That maybe because of the protest, you'd find better investors. Maybe that's naive or stupid, but I swear to God, it's what I felt.

Benny is silent.

MARK (cont'd)
If you want to say something to Collins,
go say it. I know it would mean a lot to
him.

Mark walks off.

INT. CHURCH-- DUSK

After all the shouting outside, it's quiet in the church.
Collins walks up to the middle aged man sitting in the back.
The man is wringing his hat in his hands.

COLLINS
Mr. Schunard?

You can see it in the eyes. It is MR. SCHUNARD, Angel's
father. A working class man from Queens. Solid. Proud.

MR. SCHUNARD
Tom Collins?

Collins nods. They shake hands.

MR. SCHUNARD (cont'd)
Is that a nick name or did your folks
have a grudge?

Collins smiles.

COLLINS
A little of both.

It breaks the ice. Mr. Schunard looks around the room.
Joanne is still with Maureen. Steve. A few others.

MR. SCHUNARD
My son had a lot of friends.

Collins nods.

COLLINS
He was the kindest person we ever knew,
sir.

MR. SCHUNARD
Yeah. Sounds like him.

Mr. Schunard looks around, trying to make sense of it.

MR. SCHUNARD (cont'd)
So, you're his...

He can't say, "boyfriend." Collins just nods.

MR. SCHUNARD (cont'd)
Then he told you where he wanted to be
put to rest.

COLLINS
Yes, sir. He said next to his mother.

Mr. Schunard nods and holds on tight not to cry. Collins looks at Benny walking into the church. Collins nods at Benny. Benny nods back.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Mr. Schunard... once you've made the
arrangements, you want to talk a little?
Get some coffee?

Mr. Schunard looks up at Collins. Reluctant.

COLLINS (cont'd)
Tell you the truth, I could stand to
laugh today, and I've heard you're a
master at dirty jokes.

Mr. Schunard smiles.

MR. SCHUNARD
Yeah. That might be okay.

Joanne and Maureen are sitting with each other in the pews.

JOANNE
I'm sorry, too, just don't call me
Pookie.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

An instrumental version of "Halloween" and then "Goodbye Love" are playing as Mark walks in the door to find Roger throwing all his things in a bag, getting ready to leave.

MARK
Hey.

ROGER
Hey.

Roger is just packing. Numb.

MARK
Don't do it, Roger.

ROGER

You don't know what I'm doing.

MARK

You can't leave it like that.

ROGER

Oh, should I just put up with her like
you put up with Maureen?

MARK

Maureen never loved me.

ROGER

Then, why do you hang out with her and
Joanne? Pretending everything is cool.
Meanwhile, you haven't dated anybody.
You haven't moved on. It's fucked up.

MARK

This isn't about me.

ROGER

It never is, Mark. You just let us live
your life for you.

Mark is surprised. And hurt.

MARK

Where do you--

ROGER

Oh, you're there with advice or a
shoulder to cry on. But it's not like
Angel. You take us in with one arm and
film us with the other. That is, until
you started filming evangelists.

MARK

Oh, fuck you.

ROGER

There. That's the most honest thing
you've said all year. Congratulations.

Roger heads to his bedroom. Mark follows. Angry.

MARK

My job pays for everything, you--

ROGER

Who asked you to pay for anything?
You're turning into fucking Benny.

MARK
Mimi's right. You are a cold, selfish--

ROGER
Yeah. Well, at least I'm honest.

Roger brings his shit into the living room. Mark follows.

MARK
You're honest? Okay. Then, tell me this. Are you running away because you're really jealous of Benny or are you afraid that Mimi's getting weak?

ROGER
Don't you dare.

MARK
That's the good excuse she was talking about, right?

ROGER
Mark, I'm not kidd--

MARK
I'm just asking a question. Mimi's running out of time. You're running out the door. I just want to know if that's why because now I'm thinking about April--

Roger gets in Mark's face.

ROGER
YOU BETTER SHUT YOU'RE FUCKING MOUTH
RIGHT NOW!

MARK
If she hadn't killed herself, would you have run away from her, too? That's all I want to know. If the answer's yes, I'm not going to judge you.

ROGER
Who the fuck are you to tell me about running away?

MARK
A friend.

ROGER
But who are you? All I see is your work. You live for your work. You run away--

MARK
What the hell are yo--

ROGER
From facing your failures, your
loneliness. The fact that you live a
lie.

Mark is incredulous.

ROGER (cont'd)
You're always preaching not to be numb.
"Come on. It's me. Talk to me." But
that's how you thrive. You pretend to
create and observe when you really just
detach from all of us.

MARK
Maybe because I'm the one of us to
survive.

The admission hits Mark. He is upset now.

ROGER
Poor baby.

Roger takes his bags and starts to head toward the door.

MARK
You didn't answer my question.

Roger hesitates a moment, then opens the door, revealing Mimi. He's shocked to see her. Her face. It's different. Raw and still. Ready to break.

MIMI
God damn. That was hot.

Roger stands silent. Unmoving.

MIMI (cont'd)
You don't want baggage without lifetime
guarantees? You don't want to watch me
die? Well, I just came to come to say
goodbye, love.

ROGER
Goodbye.

Roger leaves. The stillness is gone. Mimi is wringing her hands, starting to get hysterical. Mark tries to touch her shoulder to calm her.

MARK

Mimi--

MIMI

Please, don't. I'm scared, Mark. I need to go away.

MARK

I know a place. A clinic. A rehab?

MIMI

No, I don't--

MARK

I'll pay for it.

Mimi heads toward the door. On the edge.

MIMI

No. I can't waste anybody's time anymore. Thank you. You're very sweet. You take care. Okay? Maureen didn't know what she had, okay? Remember that.

Mark's eyes fill with tears. Mimi shakes her head.

MIMI (cont'd)

Oh, honey. Don't cry about us anymore.

Mimi rubs his shoulder. The door closes. Mark pauses at the door. The instrumental ends. He starts crying.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

The set of Buzzline. Mark, looking wiped out exhausted, walks past the studio audience and Gary Mann.

GARY MANN

After the break... vampire welfare queens who are also compulsive bowlers.

EXT. HIGHWAY 78 EAST-- PENNSYLVANIA-- DAY

A beat up RENT-A-WRECK is gliding down the highway.

INT. RENTAL CAR-- DAY

Roger rolls down the window and breathes in the country air. He turns on the radio. Jonathan Larson's "Destination Sky," an eerie piano ballad is playing. Roger listens to a couple of bars, then turns the radio dial to another station. Jonathan Larson's "Open Road" plays. It's a perfect fit.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- DAY

The song continues as Mimi walks the runway, getting five and ten dollar bills shoved into her stockings.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

The air is turning cold as Mimi hands the money over to the dealer in exchange for a baggie.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

The window is open. The air is freezing. But Mimi isn't feeling anything. The baggie is empty at the end table next to her grandfather's watch.

INT. EDITING ROOM-- NIGHT

The clock on the wall is ticking. Mark is looking at footage of the evangelist and his heavily made up young bride. He looks at his own reflection in the screen.

INT. RENTAL CAR-- DAWN

Roger looks at his reflection in the rear view mirror. The light coming from the East hits his eyes. Roger rubs them. Tired. It looks like he hasn't slept at all.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB DRESSING ROOM-- NIGHT

As the girls around her get into costume and character, Mimi looks at herself in the mirror. She looks like hell. She tries to cover it with foundation. A hand grabs her arm. It's her MANAGER. A woman of 50.

MANAGER

I told you, next time you come in here
fucked up, that was it.

MIMI

But, Caroli--

MANAGER

Get out of here, Mimi.

INT. EDITING ROOM-- NIGHT

Mark presses eject on the evangelist tape. He grabs another tape that says Life Support. He presses play and the first thing he sees is ANGEL laughing.

Mark smiles and puts the editing log of the evangelist piece to the side and grabs a new one. He looks at the read-out of the Angel image and enters those numbers on the sheet.

EXT. HIGHWAY 10 EAST-- NEW MEXICO-- NIGHT

The rental car passes a sign that reads SANTA FE. 60 miles.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Mimi takes a music box off her night stand.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- NIGHT

Mr. Alexi gives Mimi 20 dollars for the music box.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

The dealer gives Mimi a baggie for the 20 dollars.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

Mark is cutting together footage of Steve with Dale and the homeless people in the subways.

EXT. SANTA FE-- NIGHT

Roger's rental car turns off the exit ramp into the city.

EXT. ROCK CLUB-- NIGHT

Roger gets out of his car. He looks at all the musicians and fans in the parking lot. He enters the club.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

We move around the room to see the spot on the wall where a poster used to be. Then a missing chair. Then a dresser. She's pawned it all. The only thing left in the room is Mimi, holding her grandfather's watch, and a lot of empty baggies. Mimi is desperately searching for any signs of left-over cocaine. When she finds none, she leaves her apartment.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

Mark is cutting footage of Collins and Mimi with Joanne. The last image is of Mimi, bright and happy on New Year's Eve.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST-- NIGHT

Mimi, pale and thin, is wandering the streets, asking people for change. They look at her with fear and disgust. Scared and shivering, she finally just runs into the park.

INT. ROCK CLUB-- NIGHT

Roger is on the stage, performing. He looks down to see a pretty GIRL giving him the eye.

INT. APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Roger is now with the GIRL and a group of her friends. Some are doing bong hits. Some are drinking. The girl is fixing some heroin. Roger looks at the needle.

INT. EDITING ROOM-- DAY

Mark is cutting footage of Maureen with Roger. He looks at Roger's image.

INT. APARTMENT-- NIGHT

The girl hands the needle to Roger. He holds it in his hand.

EXT. PAWN SHOP-- NIGHT

Mimi is clutching her grandfather's watch in her hand. She looks at it. Then, goes into the shop.

INT. APARTMENT-- NIGHT

Roger looks at the needle. Tempted. Freaking out. Finally, he drops the needle to the floor and leaves in a rush. The song "Open Road" ends.

EXT. BUS STOP-- NIGHT

The terminal is empty. Roger is pacing. Fucked up with guilt and grief. He finally sits. He looks around. Completely alone. He starts crying, sobbing, putting his face in his hands. When the first wave is over, he peeks out from behind his hands and sees his red guitar. He stares at it. Thinking. An idea coming.

He cautiously picks up his guitar and plucks out a melody. Without an amp, it's just thin notes. The notes Mimi sang to him in "Another Day." The same notes that he will transform into "Finale B." We move away from him as Roger composes his one great song.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

Mark has completely filled the editing log. The final images he cuts are of himself and Angel. He presses eject.

INT. ALEXI DARLING'S OFFICE-- DAY

Alexi is on the phone. Mark walks in with the 3/4" tape. He puts it on her desk. She puts her hand on the phone.

ALEXI DARLING
Is that the evangelist piece?

MARK
No. It's the first segment of my film.

ALEXI DARLING
(into the phone)
I'll call you back.

Alexi hangs up.

MARK
You either run it on air exactly as I've cut it, and give me the go ahead to keep making segments, or you can give me my last check.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO-- DAY

Mark walks out of the studio, carrying a duffel bag, and an envelope.

INT. MAGNO SOUND-- DUSK

Mark brings the duffel bag, his new camera, and the envelope into the room. He opens the envelope containing...

HIS LAST CHECK. He signs it over to the clerk and gives the clerk his brand new \$4,500 camera.

MARK
How much time can I get for this?

CLERK
A shit load.

MARK
Good.

The clerk gives him the key.

CLERK
Welcome back, Mark.

MARK
Thanks.

INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT-- NIGHT

A key goes into the lock. The door opens revealing Mark, still carrying the duffel bag. He looks up to find Roger sitting on the couch. They stare for a moment. Then...

ROGER

Do you know where Mimi is?

Mark smiles.

INT. MIMI'S BEDROOM-- MORNING

Roger walks in to see all the furniture gone and baggies everywhere. He leaves in a hurry. The image is bouncing.

INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB-- LATE MORNING

The manager shakes her head no. Roger leaves.

INT. BENNY'S DELUXE APARTMENT-- NOON

Benny is talking with some new investors, who look a lot less uptight than the old ones. Suddenly, there's a furious POUNDING on the door.

BENNY

Excuse me a moment, gentlemen.

INT. HALLWAY-- NOON

The door opens. Benny is shocked to see Roger.

ROGER

No bullshit. I swear. I'll bury it all right now. Do you know where she is?

BENNY

I haven't seen her since the funeral.

ROGER

She didn't come to you for money? There were baggies everywhere.

Benny shakes his head. No. Roger nods and leaves.

ROGER (cont'd)

Thanks.

BENNY

Good luck, Roger.

ROGER
You, too.

INT. PAWN SHOP-- LATE AFTERNOON

Mr. Alexi shakes his head.

MR. ALEXI
She has not been here in long time, Mr.
missing employee.

ROGER
Thank you, sir.

Roger rushes out the door. Mr. Alexi looks at a customer and curses about Roger in Greek.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- NIGHT

The dealer is passing a dime bag off to GREEN CAP. Roger looks at him, calms his nerves, and approaches.

DEALER
Pretty boy.

ROGER
Do you know where she is?

DEALER
Who?

It's a stand off. Roger shrugs and hands the dealer a small wad of bills.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK-- NIGHT

Roger enters the park. Bums on benches. Gangs of kids. Dangerous. He walks past some trees and looks at the view of the GREAT LAWN, cast in moonlight. He rushes to the center of it. And sees a form on the ground.

ROGER
Mimi! Mimi!

The form turns over. It's a HOMELESS MAN. Drunk. Roger lets go and looks around, panicked. He finally sees another figure under a tree... thin, tattered, under filthy blankets. Roger walks up slowly. Scared shitless.

ROGER
Mimi?

Mimi turns over. It's jarring. She looks like a ghost. Pale and sick and frightening.

MIMI
Angel?

Roger is shocked. Like a gut shot. He looks at her hand. She's still clutching her grandfather's watch.

ROGER
Oh, Jesus.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM-- NIGHT

Mark rushes into the waiting room. The walls are still as friendly as when Angel brought Collins here. Or when Collins stayed with Angel. Mark finds Roger, pacing. Out of his mind with worry. His eyes all panic tears.

MARK
Hey.

Roger can't even speak.

MARK
Is she okay?

ROGER
I don't know. She passed out. The doctors are... I don't know.

Mark encourages Roger to sit.

MARK
Hey, calm down.

Roger can't calm down. Nor will he calm down. He's a wreck.

ROGER
It can't happen again. It can't.

MARK
She's going to be okay. Sit down.

ROGER
I don't know. It's not good, Mark. They won't even let me in there. I'm sorry I was so... I didn't mean those things.

MARK
Hey. It's okay. I'm sorry, too.

ROGER

No, you were right. About me. I mean.
I just... realizing you're an asshole...
it takes time.

Mark laughs. Roger smiles. Crazed.

ROGER (cont'd)

I guess that is kind of funny. Hey...
keep going... it's a good distraction...

MARK

I quit my job. Finishing my film.

ROGER

That's great. Really. Maybe we could
put together all our stuff. Your film.
The music. You know?

Mark doesn't know what to do. Roger is just ranting.

MARK

That would be great.

ROGER

Yeah. A show at CB's or something with
the Life Support group. We could perform
for Mimi. She'd like that.

MARK

She would.

ROGER

Yeah, and she needs to hear this song I
wrote because she's the song really. And
she can't die thinking I hate her.

With that, Roger bursts and grabs Mark. Mark holds him as
Roger lets out sobs. Roger suddenly lets go. And laughs.

MARK

What?

ROGER

I'm crying on your god damn shoulder.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-- NIGHT

The only sound is the slow beep of the heart monitor. The
door opens slowly. A nurse shows Roger into the room, which
is crowded with other poor folks without health insurance.

NURSE
Only for a minute. She's very tired.

Roger nods and slowly walks to the bed. Mimi is there. She's so sick. She smiles weakly. Happy.

MIMI
You came back.

Roger kneels at her bedside. Takes her hand. He doesn't know what to say.

MIMI (cont'd)
Still a mute, though.

Roger smiles.

ROGER
How are you feeling?

MIMI
Better. How are you--

ROGER
Much better. Yeah. I thought I lost you there for a second.

Mimi smiles. It hits something in Roger. He starts crying. The words are wrenched out slowly.

ROGER (cont'd)
And I was worried that I couldn't tell you... you were right... and what I said... I... just love you so much.

Mimi grips his hand. She cries. It's music to her ears.

MIMI
I love you, too.

ROGER
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

MIMI
Shhh.

ROGER
You deserve someone to be there all--

MIMI
Shhh.

ROGER
Can you ever forgive me?

MIMI
Of course I can. That's easy. But
Roger... you have to forgive yourself.
For all of it. Don't you?

She touches his face. Roger nods.

MIMI (cont'd)
Can you forgive me?

ROGER
About Benny?

Mimi starts to cry.

ROGER
Oh, forget that. That was... you know...
fuck it... we're kids, right? I mean, I
forget that most of the time.

MIMI
I really am sorry, Roger.

ROGER
I know. It's okay. Hey...

He touches her face to calm her.

ROGER (cont'd)
Save your strength. You have to get out
of here. I have a song for you.

MIMI
Then, sing it.

ROGER
No. You can't hear it right in here.
You have to get out. We're going to put
on a show for you.

Mimi smiles. Weakly. She's getting tired. Roger desperate.

MIMI
That's something to look forward to.

ROGER
You're going to get out of here, Mimi.

MIMI
Listen Roger... if I--

ROGER

No.

Mimi speaks slowly. Ready to fade.

MIMI

Just listen. I'll try... but if I don't get out of here, I don't want you wasting your time with regret. Okay?

Roger is beside himself.

MIMI (cont'd)

You've had enough of it. So have I. And I want you to know something. My whole life, all I ever wanted was to believe that love didn't always have to mean just pain. I always hoped I deserved that. And you came back, didn't you?

Mimi smiles and closes her eyes. Roger holds her and sobs. A long moment. Then, he looks at the heart monitor. It's still beeping. Quietly.

EXT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

The crowd outside the club looks different. The A kids aren't around. The group is a little older.

SUBTITLE: December 21, 1993

INT. CBGB'S-- NIGHT

Roger is on the stage with his red guitar. He's still charismatic, but it's changed. Grown. So, has his band. The Well Hungarians are long gone. And now... it's the Life Support group. Piano. Drums. Mark is there filming with his old camera. It jams. He smacks it. Roger is singing the end of "Your Eyes." He looks sad.

ROGER

... 'cause there's something I should have told you. Yes, there's something I should have told you. When I looked into your eyes. As we said our good-byes. You were the song all along and before the song dies. I should tell you. I should tell you. I have always loved you. You can see it in my eyes.

The song breaks into a huge electric crunch of "Musetta's Waltz" from La Boheme.

ROGER (cont'd)

Mimi!

We see MIMI, smiling her ass off. She's sitting with Collins and Joanne and Maureen. She looks a little better. Enough for three more good months.

MIMI

He's so fucking dramatic.

Collins rubs her shoulder. The song ends to big applause. Mimi claps loudly. Whistling.

As the group on the stage sets up for another number, Collins drains a fine Stoli, and turns to the girls.

COLLINS

I should tell you ladies... I rewired the ATM at the food emporium to give an honorarium to anybody with the code.

Collins holds up a wad of bills.

JOANNE

That's illegal...

COLLINS

No shit.

MIMI AND MAUREEN

What's the code?

COLLINS

A-N-G-E-L.

JOANNE

I think I'll be able to remember that one.

Collins smiles, then shushes the girls as Roger comes up to the microphone. Light applause.

ROGER

Thank you. I promise no big speeches...

The crowd applauds loudly.

ROGER (cont'd)

Fuckers.

The crowd laughs.

ROGER (cont'd)

All I wanted to say is that I don't know what next year will bring. Or next season. Or tomorrow. So this song, which is really just a combination of a lot of things I've heard and seen over the past two years, is for Angel. And Steve, everybody's favorite policeman, whom we lost last week. Mark.

The crowd applauds as the lights dim and a 16mm projector is turned on. Mark's film, in its grainy glory, is projecting behind the band. The image is of Angel at the Life Support Group. It's quiet for a moment as Mark gets on the stage. Then, a piano chord is struck hard on the stage. Mark sings.

MARK

There is no future. There is no past.

ROGER

Thank God this moment's not the last.

As the piano swells, Roger looks at Mimi. They sing to each other.

ROGER & MIMI

*There's only us. There's only this.
Forget regret or life is yours to miss.*

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP

*No other road. No other way. No day
but today.*

The lights on the stage get brighter as the Life Support Group comes up to the mic and the crowd in CB's starts joining in. Someone picks up the film projector and shines the images all over the crowd. The song breaks big.

WOMEN

I can't control.

MEN

Will I lose my dignity.

Collins joins the men singing. He's smiling.

WOMEN

My destiny.

MEN

Will someone care.

Mimi joins in with the women.

WOMEN

I trust my soul.

MEN

Will I wake tomorrow...

Maureen and Joanne look at each other and join in.

WOMEN **MEN**
My only goal is just to be. . . from this nightmare.

Mimi looks at Roger and sings.

WOMEN	MEN
Without you, the hand drops, the ear hears, the pulse beats.	There's only now. There's only here. Give in to love. Or live in fear.

Roger looks at Mimi and sings.

WOMEN	MEN
Life goes on. But I'm gone. Without you.	No other path. No other way. No day but today.

Mark is looking at the crowd and sees a girl singing. She smiles at him as much a part of the event as he is. He looks at Joanne and Maureen and smiles.

WOMEN	MEN
<i>I die without you.</i>	<i>No day but today.</i>

The band is banging out the music.

The pianist is hitting the chords hard. Singing.

WOMEN **MEN**

No day but today. I die *No day but today.*
without you.

We go wider. And the whole CB crowd is singing.

ALL
No day but today!

The voices melt into one shouting wave as Mark's filmed images reveals face after face after face. A collection of images that link the homeless, the Life Support group, Benny, Mimi, Roger, Mark, Collins, Maureen, Joanne, Steve, and finally... Angel in Tompkins Square Park. The piano fades. The song ends.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK-- DAY

Our Angel is there, smiling at us for a long moment and then...

1-70-1

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Cut!

A clap board comes into frame. Upside down. Tail slated. It claps. And our Angel relaxes. The camera keeps rolling.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Let's go again. Angel?

OUR ANGEL

I'm still here.

The assistant directors yell for quiet as Our Angel looks over and smiles. The image pans across the park to show the huge, impressive crew. The trailers. The lights. The grips. The electrics. It keeps panning until it hits the real street. The real homeless person. The junkie. And the couples holding each other. All are members of the crowd standing behind the police barriers. Just watching. Taking snap shots to bring home with them. As "What You Own" comes blaring up onto the soundtrack.

FADE OUT.